# Sacred History And Sacred Texts In Early Judaism

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(editors)

# Sacred History and Sacred Texts in Early Judaism

A Symposium in Honour of A.S. van der Woude

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# Preface

After a long and distinguished career Adam S. van der Woude will retire on Reformation Day (October 31) from the Chair of Old Testament Studies and Intertestamental Literature of the Faculty of Theology of the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen.[1] In order not to let this occasion go unnoticed, the Center of Religious Studies decided to organise a symposium in honour of one of its best known members on the very day that he himself gave his valedictory lecture. In view of Adam's academic interests, it seemed therefore an obvious choice to focus the lectures on Jewish and Christian traditions in the Intertestamental period. In addition to devoting so much of his own time and energy to this subject, he has also promoted the interest of the scholarly world in this central period in the history of Judaism and Christianity by the foundation and editing of the *Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period.*

At the symposium, four friends and colleagues from Amsterdam, Groningen and Utrecht discussed various features of the history and literature of the Second Temple period. T. Baarda compares several traditions of the Shechem episode in the *Testament of Levi.* J.N. Bremmer enters into a recent debate on the origin of the Christian idea of the atonement. P.W. van der Horst analyses the reception of Ezekiel's words 'Laws that were not good' in early Judaism and Christianity, and M.A. Wes studies a fascinating episode from Flavius Josephus in the light of the *Book of Baruch.*

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[1] For a biographical sketch of Van der Woude see A.F.J. Klijn, in F. García Martínez, C.H.J. de Geus, A.F.J. Klijn (eds.), *Profeten en profetische geschriften*, Kampen and Nijkerk 1985, 9-13; for the bibliography see, F. García Martínez , in F. García Martínez, A. Hilhorst, C. Labuschagne (eds.), *The Scriptures and the Scrolls. Studies in Honour of A.S. van der Woude on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, Leiden 1992, 228-268.

When we decided to publish the lectures, it seemed only natural to add to these contributions the valedictory lecture of Adam van der Woude himself. So we are very pleased that after some initial hesitation on his part we were able to overcome his objections to our idea.

We would like to thank the contributors to the symposium for their enthusiasm to participate in this homage, the Faculty of Theology for its support, and last but not least the publishing house Kok Pharos—and in particular Kristin de Troyer—for its ready response to our initiative and the speed with which it has produced this volume.

Groningen, Center for Religious Studies
Jan Bremmer
Florentino García Martínez

# NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

TJITZE BAARDA, b. 1932, is Professor of New Testament Studies at the Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam. His books and many articles include *The Gospel Quotations of Aphrahat, the Persian Sage*, 2 vls (1975) and *Early Transmission of Words of Jesus: Thomas, Tatian and the Text of the New Testament* (1983). He is the co-editor of, most recently, *God met ons: over de aard van het Schriftgezag* (1986); *Knowledge of God in the Graeco-Roman World* (1988) and *Jodendom en vroeg Christendom: continuïteit en discontinuïteit* (1991).

JAN N. BREMMER, b. 1944, is Professor of History of Religion at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. He is the author of *The Early Greek Concept of the Soul* (1983); co-author of *Roman Myth and Mythography* (1987) and *Martelaren van de oude kerk* (1988); editor of *Interpretations of Greek Mythology* (1987) and *From Sappho to De Sade* (1989) and co-editor of *A Cultural History of Gesture* (1991).

PIETER W. VAN DER HORST, b. 1946, is Professor of New Testament Studies and of the Jewish and Hellenistic Milieu of Early Christianity at the Rijksuniversiteit Utrecht. His books and many articles include *Chaeremon: Egyptian Priest and Stoic Philosopher* (1987²); *De onbekende God: essays over de Joodse en Hellenistische achtergond van het vroege Christendom* (1988); *Essays on the Jewish World of Early Christianity* (1990); *Ancient Jewish Epitaphs* (1991); *Studies over het Jodendom in de oudheid* (1992). He is the co-author of *Studies on the Hellenistic Background of the New Testament* (1990).

MARINUS A. WES, b. 1939, is Professor of Ancient History at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen. His most recent books include *Michael Rostovtzeff, Historian in Exile: Russian Roots in an American Context* (1990); *Classics in Russia 1700 - 1855* (1992). He is also the co-

author of a Dutch translation of Flavius Josephus' *Jewish War* and *Vita* (1992).

ADAM S. VAN DER WOUDE, b. 1927, was Professor of Old Testament Studies and Intertestamental Literature at the Rijksuniversiteit Groningen from 1960 to 1992. For his bibliography see the Preface, note 1.

# The Shechem Episode in the Testament of Levi

## A comparison with other traditions

Tjitze Baarda

*The Background of this contribution*

The intriguing phrase of Paul, 'but the wrath has come upon them finally' (1 Thess.2:16c)[1] tempted me to examine the episode of the Shechem slaughter as it is found in the Testament of Levi. And, indeed, I could not resist this enticement. The reason is obvious: this document presents us with a similar phrase as is found in Paul (TL 6:11). The resemblance is so striking that it is easily understood why most scholars are convinced that 'there must be a literary relationship between these verses'[2]. Whether Paul borrowed these words from the Testament of Levi or whether a Christian editor, c.q. interpolator, has introduced the phrase of Paul into the Testament, is still a matter of debate, to which I can hardly contribute anything new. However, in studying this problem I became increasingly interested into the context of the pertinent phrase in the description of Levi's revenge on the Shechemites for their crime against Dinah. What mainly struck me was the change of perspective in this retelling of the Old Testament story, by which the author apparently wished to exonerate his hero from every blame. Since I am an *amateur* in

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[1] Cf. my contribution 'Maar de toorn is over hen gekomen...' to the volume *Paulus en de andere Joden*, ed. T. Baarda, H. Jansen, S. J. Noorda, J. S. Vos, Delft 1984, 15-74, esp. 72, n.276.

[2] Cf. M. de Jonge (ed.), *Studies in the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Leiden 1975, 247-260, 260, cf. n.11; I. Broer, "Antisemitismus" und Judenpolemik im Neuen Testament, Ein Beitrag zum besseren Verständnis von 1 Thess. 2,14-16, *B.N.* 20 (1983), 59-91, 68 ('praktisch wörtlich identischer Formulierung').

this area of research, I hope that my friend and colleague Adam van der Woude will not blame me for this rather extensive contribution to a volume that is dedicated to him in honour of his *professional* scholarship demonstrated in his long career study of the Old Testament and of the Qumranic texts, both of which play a role in this contribution.

## I

### 1. *The arrival at Shechem*

'I, Levi, was conceived at Haran, and was born there, and after that I came with my father in Shechem' (2:1)[3] is the first biographical notice in this document. The first part reminds of Gen. 29:34a, the pregnancy of Leah (συνελήφθην, Gen. συνέλαβεν) and the birth of Levi (ἐτέχθεν, Gen. ἔτεκεν) in Haran. The second part reflects Gen. 33:18, formulated from the perspective of Levi. Instead of the mis-presentation[4] of the LXX εἰς Σαλὴμ πόλιν Συκίμων[5], TL has εἰς Σίκιμα. The biblical text explicitly mentions the fact that this city

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[3] M. de Jonge *et al.* (eds.), *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Leiden 1978, 24:8f. [henceforth quoted as J.24:8f. etc.]; R. H. Charles, *The Greek Versions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Oxford 1908 [repr. Darmstadt [3]1968], 28:3f. [henceforth: Ch.28:3f. etc.]; *idem*, The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, in: *idem*, *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament* II, Oxford 1913, 282-367, 304; F. Schnapp, Die Testamente der 12 Patriarchen, in E. Kautzsch, *Die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen des Alten Testaments* II, Tübingen (1900) [2]1921, 458-506, 465; P. Riessler, Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen, in: *idem*, *Altjüdische Schrifttum ausserhalb der Bibel*, Heidelberg 1928, 1149-1250, 1160; H. C. Kee, Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, in J. H. Charlesworth (Ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* I, Garden City N.Y., 1983, 775-828, 788; J. Becker, *Die Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen*, JSHRZ III:1, Gütersloh 1947, 47; M. de Jonge, The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, in H. F. D. Sparks, *The Apocryphal Old Testament*, Oxford 1984, repr. 1987, 505-600, 526; H. W. Hollander & M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, A Commentary*, Leiden 1985,132. Cf. also D. Haupt, *Das Testament des Levi, Untersuchungen zu seiner Entstehung und Überlieferungsgeschichte*, Halle-Saale 1969, I, 7ff. Grabe's edition is found in *Patrologia Graeca* II, Paris 1857, 1037-1150.

[4] The Hebrew read שלם,'safe(ly)', but the same reading—actually a double translation—is found in Jub.30:1, 'he went up *to Salem*, to the east of Shechem (cf.Gen.33:18b), *in peace*', cf. K. Berger, *Das Buch der Jubiläen*, Gütersloh 1981, 469f.

[5] I.e. the city of Shechem, Συκίμων being the gen.epexeg. of (τὰ) Σίκιμα, *not* 'of (the) Sichemites'.

was in the land of Canaan, which Demetrius[6], Josephus[7] and Pseudo-Philo[8] repeat in their descriptions of the travels of Jacob. The identification of Shechem as a Canaanite city is, however, present in a second biographical sketch, TL 12:5, where Levi says: ἦλθον εἰς γῆν Χαναάν. Moreover, he identifies the inhabitants as Canaanites, in TL 7:1, when he explains to his father that his attack on Shechem was part of God's design to destroy the Canaanites[9].

2. *The age of Levi at the day of his revenge*

'I was still a young man, about twenty years old, when I performed—with Simeon—vengeance on Hemor' (2:2). Levi claims to have been still a *minor* (νεώτερος), which may have an apologetic tone. The approximate date (ὡσεὶ ἐτῶν εἴκοσιν) has been stated more precisely as *eighteen years* in his second bibliographical description (12:5): 'I was eight years old, when I came into the land of Canaan[10], and eighteen years (ὀκτωκαίδεκα ἐτῶν), when I killed Shechem. It seems quite certain that the Aramaic fragment (ובר שנין תמנה עשרה) may have given the same age[11]. This dating

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6 Demetrius, *On Jacob*, in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX,21:1-19 (ed. K. Mras, *Eusebius Werke* VIII:1 (GCS 43:1), Berlin 1953, 508-512, 509:14f.); N. Walter, Demetrius, in *Fragmente jüdisch-hellenistischer Exegeten* (JSHRZ III:2), Gütersloh 1975, 280-293, 286 n.8a, rightly understands Σίκμων as a place name, but wrongly attributes it to a misunderstanding of Demetrius on the part of Alexander Polyhistor. See for Demetrius a.o.: P. W. van der Horst, The Interpretation of the Bible by the Minor Hellenistic Jewish authors, in M. J. Mulder (Ed.), *Mikra* (CRINT II/1), Assen/Maastricht-Philadelphia 1988, 519-546, esp. 528ff.

7 Josephus, *Antiquitates* I, 337 (xxi:1), ed. H. St. J. Thackeray, *Josephus* IV, Cambridge MA -London $^{5}$1967, 160:25f.: εἰς Σίκιμον παρῆν—Χαναναίων δ' ἐστὶν ἡ πόλις.

8 Pseudo-Philo, *Lib. Ant. Bibl.*, 8:7, ed. G. Kisch, *Pseudo-Philo's Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum*, Notre Dame 1949, 134:4: *et habitavit Jacob in terra Chanaan*, omitting the name of the place.

9 J.32:6f. ἐξουδενώσει κύριος τοὺς Χαναναίους.

10 Cf. TL 2:1 Arm. *yet owt' amac'*, 'after eight years' instead of μετὰ ταῦτα, an anticipation of 12:5; M. Stone, *The Testament of Levi*, Jerusalem 1969, 54, 2nd app.

11 Ch.254 (Bodleian Fragm. col.d:16); cf. the Syriac fragment, *ibid.*; the Aramaic text is not quite clear here, since some scholars guess תשעה instead of תמנה.

differs from that of Demetrius: when Levi entered Canaan he was ten years and six months (ἐτῶν τ̄ μηνῶν ἕξ), Jacob has lived for ten years near Shechem (*lit.* παρὰ Ἐμμώρ), which means that Levi was twenty years and six months (ἐτῶν εἴκοσι μηνῶν ἕξ) when he massacred Shechem[12]. At first sight there is a difference between these observations and the remark in Midrash Rabbah on Gen. 34:25, where the expression 'each man his sword' (איש חרבו) led R. Simeon b. Eleazar to the conclusion that 'they—that is Simeon and Levi—were thirteen years old (בן שלש עשרה שנה היו)[13]. Was there a tradition to that effect?[14] In my view, its meaning may have been nothing else than they were no longer קטנים, but אנשים (deduced from איש חרבו), that is they had both passed the age of a בר מצוה, and consequently were accountable for their deeds. The Rabbi must have known that Simeon and Levi, being children of the same woman and not twins, must have been of a different age[15].

### 3. *The Rape of Dinah*

The rape, Gen.34:1-2, is only alluded to, be it in several passages of our Testament. The clearest reference is found in 7:3, '...for *they* have really committed a folly in Israel *by defiling our sister*'[16]. The crime is imputed to *all* Sichemites, as is the case in the biblical text (34:27) and in several other retellings of the story. 'And then *they* carried off Dinah..., ...*they* had defiled Dinah', the author of Jubilees (30:2f.) writes, in spite of the fact that it is clear that only Shechem the Son of Hamor actually defiled her (30:2)[17]. But the author wished to explain, why the slaughter happened to *all* men of the city. There is a collective guilt, 'because *they* had dis-

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12 Demetrius, in Eusebius, *Praep.Evang.* IX,21.9, ed. Mras, 509:19-21, 510:1-3. Was there a common tradition lying behind Demetrius and TL 2:1, when both speak of about twenty years?

13 *Midrash Rabbah* I (ed. Wilna), Jerusalem 1975, 304b.

14 H. Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah, Genesis*, II, London $^{3}$1961, 743 n.3.

15 Even Demetrius, who assumed a difference of only 'ten months' (= nine months) between the two brothers, counted 21 years for Simeon, twenty for Levi.

16 Charles adds Δίναν with Mss. *d m e f*; cf. below, §§ 12, 24 and 36.

17 R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*, London 1902, 179; The Book of Jubilees, *APOT* II, Oxford 1913, 1-82, 58; K. Berger, *o.c.*, 470.

honoured...Dinah'[18]. The same generalization is made in Judith 9:2, where the Sichemites are designated as 'the strangers who loosened the girdle of a virgin to defile her'[19]. The collectivity of the crime is again emphasized in Joseph and Aseneth (23:13), where mention is made of 'the outrage[20]...which the Sichemites performed with respect to our sister Dinah', although the author adds, 'whom Shechem the Son of Hemor had defiled'[21]. The crime of one man is significant for the attitude of all Sichemites, as has been stated in the Aramaic fragment of TL, 'I killed Shechem, and finished off *the workers of violence*' (עבדי חמסא )[22].

The verb used in TL 7:3 to describe the fool act of Shechem is μιᾶναι (*v.l.*: μιάναντες), which reflects the biblical text, 'and Jacob heard that the son of Hemor had *defiled* Dinah', Gen.34:5. The verb טמא is rendered with ἐμίανεν in the LXX (cf. ἐμίαναν in 34:13.27). The same term is used in Joseph and Aseneth, ἣν ἐμίανε Συχὲμ ὁ υἱὸς Ἐμμώρ (23:13)[23] and in Philo's reference, μιαίνειν...καὶ φθείρειν ἐπεχείρησαν, *De Migr.Abr.*224[24]. Among the other allusions[25] the strongest is undoubtedly the word βδέλυγμα (cf. § 24), an abhorrent act.

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18 Charles, *Jubilees*, 179 (1913, 58); Berger, *o.c.*, 470.

19 R. Hanhart, *Judith* (Septuaginta VIII:4), Göttingen 1979, 104.

20 The term ὕβρις for the rape is found in Theodotus, *On Jacob* (?), in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX.22, 1-11, ed. K. Mras, *o.c.*, 512-516, 515:8, τὴν ὕβριν τῆς ἀδελφῆς (in the paraphrase of Alexander Polyhistor); cf. for Theodotus, R. J. Bull, A Note on Theodotus' Description of Shechem, *HThR* 60 (1967), 221-227; J. J. Collins, The Epic of Theodotus and the Hellenism of the Hasmonaeans, *HThR* 73 (1982) 91-104; R. Pummer, Genesis 34 in Jewish Writings of the Hellenistic and Roman Periods, *HThR* 75 (1982) 177-188; P. W. van der Horst, *Joods-Hellenistische Poëzie*, Kampen 1987, 58-67; idem, Interpretation of the Bible, 526; G. W. E. Nickelsburg, The Bible Rewritten and Expanded, in M. E. Stone, *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (CRINT II/2), Assen-Philadelphia 1984, 89-156, 121ff.

21 M. Philonenko, *Joseph et Aséneth*, Leiden 1968, 204:6-8 (23:13).

22 Ch.254 (Bodl.Fragm.col.d:17f.), cf. 245 (Cambr.Fragm., col.b:19); the Syriac reads '*all* doers of evil', cf. the ἀσεβεῖς of Theodotus (Mras, *o.c.*, 515:15).

23 Philonenko, *o.c.*, 204:7f.

24 Philo, *De Migratione Abrahami*, 224, F. H. Colson-G. H. Whitaker, *Philo* IV, London-Cambridge MA 1932, 121-267, 264:8f., cf. 265 n. The gist of 'they tried' is that they did not succeed.

25 TL 2:2 and 5:3 mention only the name of the girl to refer to the crime done to her.

Another allusion to the rape is found in TL 6:8, where Levi tells his children that he knew that God was ill-favoured towards Shechem, since they wanted to do to Sarah, what they actually did to Dinah ( ὃν τρόπον ἐποίησαν Δίναν τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν). From the comparison with Sarah it is clear that they stole the wives of strangers, ἐν δυναστείᾳ ἁρπάζοντες τὰς γυναῖκας αὐτῶν (6:10). The idea of ravishing occurs in several texts. Josephus writes that Shechem ravished her and injured her, φθείρει δι' ἁρπαγῆς[26]. Theodotus tells us that he ravished her and took her home and injured her, καὶ ἁρπάσαντα ὡς ἑαυτὸν διακομίσαι καὶ φθεῖραι αὐτήν[27]. We may compare here Philo's allegorical paraphrase, οὗτοι (plur.!) τὴν παρθένον ψυχὴν ἐξαρπάσαντες λαθεῖν ἤλπισαν[28]. The background of this terminology is Gen.34:2, ויקח, אתה 'and he took her', which in Targum Ps.Jonathan is paraphrased as ודבר יתה באונסא, 'and he took her *by force*' (or'...*by robbery*')[29]. Pseudo-Philo, 'et Dinam filiam eius *rapuit* Sychem...et *humiliavit* '[30], expresses the idea of robbery, but also of humiliation which has been suggested by the LXX reading, καὶ ἐταπείνωσεν αὐτήν (= ויענה), Gen.34:2, which is also reflected in Philo's text, ταπεινώσας αὐτήν[31].

4. *The age of Dinah at the time of the Rape*

Can something be said concerning the age of Dinah during the rape on the basis of the data in Testament of Levi? We know that according to Jub. 30:2 she was supposed to be a little girl, 'a child of *twelve* years'[32]. Demetrius, however, assumes that she was a good sixteen years old, ἐτῶν οὖσαν δεκαὲξ μηνῶν τεσσάρων[33]. In his view, Dinah and Levi differed in age exactly *four* years and *two*

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26 Josephus, *Antiquitates* I, 337 (xxi.1), ed. Thackeray, *o.c.*, 162:3f.

27 Theodotus, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 514:13f.; the verb φθείρειν is found in Demetrius (φθαρῆναι, Mras, *o.c.*, 509:20; φθοράν, 510:3), Philo, *Migr.Abr.*, 225 (ἐφθείρετο, Colson-Whitaker, *o.c.*, IV. 266:6), *De Mutatione Nominum* 195 (διαφθείρειν, Colson-Whitaker, *o.c.*, V.242:9).

28 Philo, *Migr.Abr.*, 224, ed. Colson-Whitaker, *o.c.*, IV. 264:15f.

29 M. Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, Berlin 1903, 63.

30 Ps.-Philo, *Antiquitates* 8:7, ed. Kisch, *o.c.*, 134:4f.

31 Philo, *Mut.Nom.*, ed. Colson-Whitaker, *o.c.*, V.242:2f.

32 Charles, *Jubilees*, 179.

33 Demetrius, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 509:21, 510:1.

months, which is less than in the Book of Jubilees, where Levi was born 'in the new moon of the first month, in the sixth year of this (=third) week', Anno Mundi 2127, and Dinah, 'in the seventh of the seventh month, in the sixth year of the fourth week', A. M. 2134. This implies that there is a difference of seven years and six months[34]. A difference of *eight* years has been assumed in a list preserved by Syncellus[35].

Remarkably enough, TL 12:5 has been adduced as proof for a similar chronology as found in Jubilees. In his first translation (1902)[36], Charles comments on the twelve years of Jub.30:2 in the following way: 'This agrees with the reckoning in Test. Levi 12. There Levi, who was six years older than Dinah, slew Shechem at the age of eighteen', but in 1913, he corrects himself when dealing with the same passage: 'Cf. Test.Levi xii.5 and Jub.xxviii.14.23, which together make her eleven'[37]. Berger annotates his rendering, 'ein Kind von zwölf Jahren', with the following remark: 'Vgl. Test XII. Levi 12,5'[38].

Does the Testament of Levi contribute to fixing a date for the rape? It is obvious that the author of Jubilees makes Levi (born a.M.2127) and Dinah (born a.M.2134) arrive at Shechem in 2143, Levi being 16 years old, Dinah 9 years of age. The fact that she was raped in her twelfth year (a.M.2146) implies that they had only lived there for *three* years before the incident happened. These numbers differ both from TL 12:5 and from Demetrius: Levi comes to Shechem, when he was 8 years old (Demetrius: 10), and lived there for 10 years before the rape of Dinah. So one may assume that according to this tradition Dinah was eleven (TL) or thirteen (Demetrius).

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34 Charles, *Jubilees*, 172f.

35 Cf. Charles, *Jubilees*, 170 nota ad 28:11-24: Levi is born in the 82th year of Jacob, Dinah in his 90th. The list agrees with Jub.28:23, in making Zebulon and Dinah twins. Charles offers also a list of dates collected by Dodwell (p.172, = 170, n.) which was presumably based on the Testaments (?): Levi was born in the 81th year of Jacob and seven years older than Dinah, born in the 88th year.

36 Charles, *Jubilees*, 179n.

37 Charles, Jubilees, 58.

38 Berger, *Jubiläen*, 470.

## II

### 5. *The initiative of Levi*

1. Levi is credited with having taken the inititative in avenging the rape of his sister, although he was the younger of the two sons that made the assault at Shechem. The biblical text, Gen.34:5, tells us that Jacob was at home and his sons in the field with the flocks, when the report of the rape came to Jacob. His sons heard it only afterwards. They were wrathful and furious, when they heard about it, 34:7 (cf. Jub. 30:3). This might suggest that Jacob and *all* his sons were involved in making a deceitful plan (במרמה)[39] against the Sichemites, although the sequel of the narrative does not imply that Jacob was aware of the ruse of the circumcision as a means to destroy the Sichemites. As a matter of fact, Jacob was shocked by the action of his sons: they were guilty, and especially Simeon and Levi. This is, at least, the thrust of Gen. 49:6. Jacob did not wish to have anything to do with their plans and their assembly. The Targums, therefore, make it clear that Jacob *was not even present* in their secret council, changing בסדם אל תבא ברזהון לא הות נפשי into נפשי[40]. A similar idea has been developed in the epic poem of Theodotus: here it is Jacob who wanted to settle the problem in a civil way. The Sichemites should become Jews through circumcision, before Shechem could marry Dinah[41]. The initiative for the *raid* did not come from Jacob.

2. Theodotus, however, did not entrust Levi with the initiative, but Simeon. 'One of the sons of Jacob, whose name was Simeon, decides to kill Hemor and Shechem, since he refused to accept the rape of his sister by a civil arrangement (or: in a courteous

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[39] The ethical problem was felt by many early commentators, cf. e.g. *Midrash Rabbah* 80:8 on Gen.34:14, 'with guile': R. Samuel b. Nachman denies that this was a cause of deceit, for the Holy Spirit declares 'because he had defiled Dinah their sister', Freedman, *o.c.*, 740f.

[40] A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic*, I, Leiden [2]1992, 85; M. Aberbach-B. Grossfeld, *Targum Onkelos to Genesis*, New York 1982, 283; cf. M. Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, 92; The fragment Targum even says that he was not pleased with their plans, בעצחהון לא איתרעית נפשי, M. A. Klein, *The Fragment-Targums of the Pentateuch* I, Rome 1980, 157.

[41] Theodotus, in Eusebius, *o.c.*, IX.22:5-7, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 514:14-21, 515:1-5.

way)'[42]. Once he had made his decision, he consulted his brother Levi about it and got him involved; so it was he who incited Levi to proceed into action[43]. The prayer of Judith, in Judith 9, although it mentions the fact that all brothers ('your dear children') were involved in the action, expressly mentions Judith's ancestor, Simeon, as the principal person in the attack: 'O Lord, God of my father Simeon, in whose hand You gave a sword to take vengeance of the strangers'[44].

3. It is a remarkable thing that Jubilees, in spite of its high esteem for Levi, makes *both* men, Simeon and Levi (in this order), responsible for the action. 'And Simeon and Levi mocked at them (cf.TL 7:2) in guile, and Simeon and Levi were determined in their heart to destroy them', Jub.30:4 Lat[45]. A common decision has also been emphasized by Philo's exegesis, *De Mut.Nom.* 200, in which he relates that those who were prepared to repel the profane and impure ways were two in number, Simeon and Levi, but one in will (γνώμη δὲ εἷς)[46]. Philo argues this on the basis of Gen. 49:6f., where Jacob in his blessings counted them as one: they were one in harmony of mind in their impetus for one and the same purpose. Moses went even so far—Dt.33:8—that he mentioned only Levi in his blessings, including Simeon under the name of Levi, blending the two natures by making them one, after having united *hearing* (that is, Simeon[47]) and *doing* (Levi)[48].

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[42] Theodotus, *ibid.* IX.22:8, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 515:7-9, esp. μὴ βουλήθεντα πολιτικῶς ἐνεγκεῖν.

[43] Theodotus, *ibid.*, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 515:9-11.

[44] Judith 9:2, ed. Hanhart, *o.c.*, 104:7f.; cf. 105:6.

[45] Charles, *Jubilees*, 179, n.3: *et posuerunt in corde suo Symeon et Levi exterminare eos.*

[46] Philo, *De Mutatione Nominum*, 200, ed. Colson-Whitaker, *Philo* V, 244:30-37; 246:1f.

[47] Cf. *De Ebrietate* 94, Colson-Whitaker, *Philo* III, 366:18, Συμεών, ἀκοὴ γὰρ οὗτος ἑρμηνεύεται.

[48] The ordinary etymology is αὐτός μοι = הו לי < הלוי, cf. *De Plantatione*, 64, ed. Colson-Whitaker, *Philo* III, 224:25,28. Does Philo present us here with another etymology? Cf. לאה or לאי, 'to be weary', by having done too much. Another etymology is found in *Migr. Abr.* 224, ed. Colson-Whitaker, *o.c.*, 264, where Simeon and Levi are called οἱ φρονήσεως ἀκουσταὶ καὶ γνώριμοι, ἀκουστής being a play on שמעון, γνώριμος, a fellow, someone familiar, being a pun on לוי, (< לוא, 'to accompany, to be familiar').

6. *The Vision of Levi*

1. We spoke of Levi's initiative as a particular element in the retelling of the Shechem episode in the Testament of Levi. However, we have to qualify this, since his initiative was motivated by a divine decision. As a matter of fact, he received a visionary revelation that not only deals with his investiture as a priest[49], but also with a divine command to avenge Dinah (5:3). The vision as a whole is embedded in the story of the raid on the Sichemites, since TL 2:1f. is continued in 6:1f. The revelation occurred to Levi, when he and his brothers were tending[50] the flocks in Abel-Maul (TL 2:3a). Jacob was then not with them (cf. 6:1). A spirit of understanding came over him, so that he could clearly perceive the sinful state of mankind (2:3b)[51]. When in distress he prayed for salvation, he was caught by a sleep, τότε ἐπέπεσεν ἐπ' ἐμὲ ὕπνος... (2:4f.). This was the beginning of long visonary state[52], from which he awakened three chapters later, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ὥσπερ ἔξυπνος γενόμενος...(5:7). His earlier distress gave way to full praise of the Highest and of the guardian angel, 'who stands at the side of Israel and of all righteous people' (5:6)[53].

7. *The mountain of the Vision*

The vision begins with the disclosure of a high mountain, καὶ ἐθεασάμην ὄρος ὑψηλόν(2:5). Levi immediately interrupts his description of the vision to tell his children, which mountain it was. In doing so he anticipates an observation that was to be told later

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49 Cf. TL 2-5, cf. esp. 2:10, 4:2, 5:2 (12:5); for an analysis of these chapters, cf. M. de Jonge, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, Assen 1953, 46-51, *Studies*, 247-260; J. Becker, *Untersuchungen zur Entstehungsgeschichte der Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen*, 257-269.

50 J.24:9; ἐποιμαίνομεν, the plural is rendered by Schnapp, Riessler; Ch.28:7, ἐποίμαινον, the singular is rendered by Kee, Becker, a.o; see for the textual problem, H. J. de Jonge, Die Textüberlieferung der Testamente der zwölf Patriarchen, in M. de Jonge (ed.), *Studies*, 45-62, 59.

51 Cf. M. de Jonge, *Testaments* (1953), 50; *idem*, Notes on Testament of Levi II-VII, in *Travels in the World of the Old Testament*, Festschrift M. A. Beek, Assen 1974, 132-145, 139 (= *idem*, *Studies*, 247-260, 254).

52 M. de Jonge, *Testaments* (1953), 46ff., Notes, 141, 144f. (= *Studies*, 256, 259f.); Becker, *Untersuchungen*, 257-270.

53 For the identification of the angel, cf. Charles, Testaments, 308; M. de Jonge, *Testaments* (1953), 93; Haupt, *Testament*, 19f.

on in his report, namely an incident that happened after the revelation, when he was on his way home. This observation, which has been omitted in a group of manuscripts, *c-h-i-j* [54], has in this very context the air of a gloss[55]. Nevertheless it may have been part of the Greek text of the author, who wanted to convey to his readers that Levi saw a real mountain, although he saw it in a visionary dream. The words in question are:

τοῦτο ὄρος Ἀσπίδος ἐν Ἀβελμαούλ,

'this was the mountain *Aspis* (or: of the *Aspis*) in Abel-Maul'[56]. It is the same mountain where he afterwards found a shield (ἀσπίς), so it was from this 'shield' that the mountain got its name. For we read in 6:1b:

διὸ καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ ὄρους Ἀσπίς,
ὅ ἐστιν ἐγγὺς Γεβάλ ἐκ δεξιῶν Ἀβιλά.

These two verses 2:5 and 6:1b form an *inclusio* for the visionary experience of Levi[57].

This mountain is the place where Levi enters the heavens (2:6f.). The Greek text would be clearer, if we were allowed to read as part of the original text καὶ ἤμην ἐν αὐτῷ, a reading preserved only in the so-called α-recension[58] instead of the identification of

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54 Cf. Ch.29:3 and app.; it has not been rendered by Charles, Becker and Kee.

55 J. T. Milik, Le Testament de Lévi en Araméen, *RB* 62 (1955) 398-406, 404, speaks of a 'glose propre à l'archétype de ce groupe de mss.'. So Becker, *Untersuchungen*, 259, n.2 ('sekundäres Interpretament'). M. de Jonge, *Testaments*, 50 ascribed the 'gloss' to the compilator (i.e. the Christian author). He acknowledges that this anticipation is 'obviously awkward' (Notes, 250), but this is exactly the reason why it has been omitted in the other family of texts. In my view, De Jonge is correct here in suggesting that it was part of the original Greek text; it may have been also part of a tradition that was used by the Greek author, for it turns out that also the Aramaic text has a geographical notice at this point

56 De Jonge, Testaments (ed. Sparks), 526 renders 'the mount Aspis in Abel-Meholah'; Hollander-De Jonge, *Testaments*, 132 'the mountain of the Shield in Abel-Maul', cf. §§ 8-9.

57 M. de Jonge, *Testaments* (1953), 50; for the view that this vision is an interpolation, cf. J. Thomas, Aktuelles im Zeugnis der zwölf Väter, in C. Burchard, J. Jervell, J. Thomas, *Studien zu den Testamenten der zwölf Patriarchen*, Berlin 1969, 62-150, 78; Becker, *Untersuchungen*, 257ff.

58 Ch.29:3f., on the basis of *c-h-i-j*. The Armenian is divided: the α-text reads: *ev es kayi i weray lerinn*, 'and I was standing on the mountain'. De Jonge, Notes, 251, follows the β-recension, because it is the *lectio durior*,

the mountain. These words could easily have been omitted by parablepsis[59]. Levi experienced that he was placed upon the top of the mountain, where earth and heaven meet each other, so that when the heavens were opened[60] he could enter them (...εἴσελθε. Καὶ εἰσῆλθον...2:6f.). Later on, within the narrative of the vision, he is brought back to earth, τότε ὁ ἄγγελος ἤγαγέ με ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν, 5:3. The mountain of the vision is the same mountain as the one from which he went back to his father (6:1), so that vision and reality seem to have been mingled in Levi's report[61].

8. *The location of the mount Aspis.*

1. The location of the mountain Aspis is still an unsettled problem, in spite of the fact that the text is rather precise in its geographical description. It is a high mountain located in Abel-Maul (2:5), near Gebal on the right side[62] of Abila (6:1b). The author of the tradition underlying our document must have had in mind a specific location which is no longer clear to us: 'Der Berg ist geographisch nicht bestimmbar'[63]. Is it possible that the Greek author merely took over names that he had no notion of?[64] And is it possible that the latter was not very lucky in his choice of Greek equivalents?

2. The first problem is that the author locates the mountain in the region of *Abel-Maul*, which suggests the Hebrew name Abel-Meholah, ten miles south of Beth Sean, about twenty miles north-east of Shechem[65]. This could be a place which is apt for tending

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whereas the α-recension would have been an attempt to avoid a difficulty of the text. Since one might have in the Qumran fragment, col.ii:14, a possible equivalent (<...ל>ע אנה ויתבח, 'and I sat o(n the mountain'),—contra Milik, Testament, 400, 404, who surprisingly finds the words 'et j'y demeurai' in the lacuna after *line* 17—one might consider the possibility that the author of the Greek text wrote both the identification of the mountain en parenthèse and the notice on Levi's being on the mountain as the entrance to heaven.

59 καὶ ἤμην...καὶ ἰδού...

60 See for this motive, Becker, *Testamente*, 47 n.6a.

61 Cf. also Haupt, *Testament*, 17 (esp.n.7).

62 De Jonge (1984) renders with 'in the south of', but this implies that we know the perspective from which the author gives this direction.

63 Becker, *Testamente*, 51, n.1a, cf. 47, n.3a.

64 So e.g. Hollander-De Jonge, *Testaments*, 133.

65 Cf. Judg. 7:22; 1 Kgdms. 4:11, 19:16; Haupt, *Testament*, 11 assumes that the

flocks, cf. 2:3, and being not too far from Shechem. However, the Aramaic fragments contain the name אבל מין, cf.' Αβελμαιν for אבל מים 2 Chr. 16:4, which seems to be another name for Abel Beth Maacha, a location south east of the Hermon in the north of the country[66].

3. The second problem is that the author says that the mountain was near *Gebal*. This usually denotes the city of Byblos (cf. Ezek.27:9), which in Josh.13:5 is found combined with the Libanon and Hermon. This is, however, too far off from 'Abel-Maul'[67] to be said ἐγγύς Γεβάλ. So one can understand that scholars have declined such an identification[68]. Scholars who seek the mountain Aspis in the Shechem district suggest that one should read here Γεβάλ = Γαιβάλ as the mountain Ebal[69].

4. The third problem is *Abila*. It reminds us of the capital of Abilene on the north-east slope of the Hermon. But this identification has met with more than hesitation[70]. Another proposal is that it could have been Abel, as distinguished from Beth Maacha in some texts[71]. The problem, however, is the different spellings of the name in the manuscripts. 'Αβιλά is found in the crown witness for the family I text, Ms. *b*. The variations within family II present us with the spellings 'Αβιμά (*g e a f*) or 'Αμιβά (*l d m*)[72], whereas the words 'on the right side of Abila' are omitted in *c-h-i-j* [73] One might ask, whether the name was a misinterpretation for Abel-Maul[74], e.g. because this name was written as an abbreviation,

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author thought of the vicinity of Sichem.

66 Cf. 2 Kgdms. 15:20; 2 Sam.20:15.

67 This is even valid, if one would prefer the reading of the Aramaic text 'Abel-mayyin'.

68 Becker, *Testamente*, 51, n.1c, 'diese Identifizierung muss geographisch ausschieden'; Milik, Testament, 403, n.6, assumes that Γεβὰλ ἐκ δεξιῶν was a misrepresentation of אבל מין, which he read as גבל ימין, but Milik does not explain how 'Αβιλά is to be understood in that case.

69 Cf. De Jonge, *Testaments* (1953), 143, n.68.

70 Becker, *Testamente*, 51, n.1d, 'geographisch abwegig'.

71 Cf. Abel Beth Maacha, 2 Sam.20:15, Abel and Beth Maacha, 20:14, Abel, 20:18.

72 See for the differences in spelling H. J. de Jonge, The earliest traceable stage of the Textual Tradition of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, in M. De Jonge (Ed.), *Studies*, 63-86, 71f.

73 Haupt, *Testament*, 13, rejects it as a gloss.

74 M. de Jonge, *Testaments* (1953), 143, n.68.

namely אב' מ', rendered as Ἀβιμά. A further problem is that we do not know from which perspective 'to the right side of A.' is thought of, so the reader is left with mere guesses[75].

9. *Once again Aspis*

1. The mountain Aspis cannot be traced on our maps, as we have seen in the preceding observations. The author himself says that the mountain Aspis got its name from ἀσπίς, because a shield (ἀσπίς) was found there (6:1). This is the more remarkable, since in the vision Levi has been presented with 'shield and sword' (5:3). The Greek word for *shield* is here ὅπλον, which can mean weapon in general, but in this combination must be shield.

Why does the author use here the word ἀσπίς? One can understand that some scholars have sought for an explanation in the Hebrew or Aramaic Levi tradition. Sayce[76] identified the mountain as Hermon, since הרמון could be named שריון (Deut.3:9). The latter word might be interpreted as 'armour' or 'cuirass', which the translator wrongly understood as ἀσπίς. A similar identification ('Hermon') was brought forward by Perles[77], who posited that ἀσπίς was originally meant to denote a *serpent*, which in the original tradition was written as חורמן. These ingenuous solutions did not convince everyone. 'Both explanations are unconvincing' is the general judgment[78]. The finding of a possible original Aramaic אבל מין as the name of the location which has been rendered as Abel-Maul in Greek, has revived the interest in the solution of Sayce[79].

2. Although I do not want to revive the solution of Perles, I think that it would be worthwhile to consider the possibility that ἀσπίς was interpreted as *shield* by the author of the Greek text,

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75 Becker, *Testamente*, 51, n.1d, 'eine Identifizierung nicht möglich'.

76 Cf. Charles, Testaments, 308; M. de Jonge, *Testaments* (1953), 143, n.68; Haupt, *Testament*, 11f.

77 Cf. M. de Jonge, *Testaments* (1953), 143, n.68; Haupt, *Testament*, 12.

78 Cf. e.g. M. de Jonge, *l.c.*, who adds, 'Moreover the Hermon is too far from Shechem'. The latter argument, however, is not convincing for those who follow the Aramaic mentioning of Abel-Mayyin here and find in the Hermon a place where revelations are not uncommon, cf. Henoch 13:9f., Milik, Testament, 404.

79 Milik, Testament, 404f.

whereas in his source it meant *serpent*. The ὄρος Ἀσπίδος in 2:5 is the 'mount Aspis', or the 'mount of the Aspis', the 'mountain of the Shield'. But was it originally meant to denote 'the mountain of the Serpent'? In *Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer* the text of Amos 5:19, 'or went into the house and leaned his hand on the wall, and the *serpent* (נחש) bit him' is explained as a reference to the Shechem episode. When Jacob went into his house, in the land of Canaan, the serpent bit him. And who was the Serpent? This was Shechem, the son of Hemor.[80] This explanation is based on the fact that Hemor is called the Hevite—החוי—which allows the pun with the serpent: the word נחש has been rendered in Aramaic Targums with חויא. One may also compare bShabb. 85a: '*And Hevite* (חוי)—Said R. Papa: (It teaches) that they tasted the earth like a serpent (חויא)[81]. Such traditions[82] connecting the Shechem episode with the *serpent* could have led to a pun on the name of Shechem, the Son of Hemor, the Hevite, in Aramaic or Hebrew tradition, and consequently have given rise to the name Aspis. If there is a connection of this kind it might suggest a connection not with the Hermon, but with the locality of Shechem. The idea that there may have been a *paronomasia* in a Semitic document or tradition cannot totally been ruled out[83]. It is, however, clear that the Greek author wished to refer to a shield.

10. *The divine command of vengeance upon Shechem*

1. The heavenly vision included besides the investiture as a priest (2-5) a divine command to Levi to avenge Dinah (5:3)[84]. This reminds us of Jub. 30:18, where the execution of vengeance upon Israel's enemies is likewise connected with the priesthood of Levi and his descendants[85]. In TL the appointment as a priest is

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80 G. Friedländer, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, London 1916, 287.

81 H. Freedman, *Shabbat* (The Babylonian Talmud, Seder Moed I), London 1938, 404.

82 *Bereshit Rabba* lxxxix:6 also introduces Amos 5:19 in the context of Jacob's dealing with Hemor, the father of Shechem, however connected with other persons.

83 Cf. Haupt, *Testament*, 23, esp. n.47.

84 Cf. Haupt, *Testament*, 28f., 31.

85 Charles, *Jubilees*, 182f.; Jubilees, 59; Becker, *Jubiläen*, 473n.; M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten*, Leiden-Köln 1961, 164, n.4; 182f.

given in heaven (2:10, 4:2 and 5:2), then the angel leads Levi back to earth—which still happens within the vision—and presents him with shield and sword, and charges him with the task of avenging the offence to Dinah. Apparently, the author wished to distinguish between the *heavenly* investiture as a priest and the *earthly* order of vengeance: although connected, they are distinguished in character. The words with which the command is given are: ποίησον ἐκδίκησιν ἐν Συχὲμ ὑπὲρ Δίνας, 'Execute vengeance on Shechem for the sake of Dinah'. Shechem is here not the city—that would require ἐν Σικίμοις—but the son of Hemor (Συχέμ) who had seduced Dinah. This is exactly what Levi does in TL. For, contrary to the biblical narrative, Levi kills here *only* Shechem, not the other men of the city[86].

2. However, Levi does not stand alone. The angel not only charges him with the task, but also promises his assistance (5:3c): κἀγὼ ἔσομαι μετά σου, ὅτι κύριος ἀπέσταλκέ με, 'And I shall be with you, for the Lord has sent me'. The angel, who reveals himself as the guardian angel of Israel and of all righteous men (5:6f.), will be of assistance in the day of trial (θλίψις): Levi needed to know his name to be able to *call upon him* (ἵνα ἐπικαλέσωμαί σε) in the battle, just as—in Judith 9:4—the sons of Jacob *called upon God* (ἐπεκαλέσαν σε εἰς βοηθόν) for heavenly assistance[87].

3. This enhances the idea that God did not only order the raid on the Sichemites, but is also involved in the war. The view that God himself was the ultimate avenger of the rape of Dinah is expressed in several other texts. In Jub.30:5 we read, 'Judgment is ordained in heaven against them, that they should destroy with the sword all the men of the Shechemites' (cf. 30:23)[88]. Again, in Judith 9:2-4, it is God who gave the sword of vengeance to Simeon and delivered the Sichemites into the hands of the sons of Jacob[89]. When Levi and Simeon show their swords to the son of Pharao—Joseph and Aseneth 23:13—they say about these weapons that God has avenged with them the outrage of the Sichemites (ἐν αὐταῖς ἐξεδίκησε κύριος ὁ θεὸς τὴν ὕβριν κτλ.)[90]. Most explicit in this

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86 See below §§ 28f.
87 Hanhart, *Judith*, 104.
88 Charles, *Jubilees*, 180; Jubilees, 58; cf. also 30:6.9.17.
89 Hanhart, *Judith*, 103f.
90 Philonenko, *Joseph and Aséneth*, 204:6.

regard is Theodotus, when he relates how Simeon persuaded Levi to share his action against Shechem by referring to a divine oracle[91]:

> εὖ γὰρ ἐγὼ μῦθον <γε> πεπυσμένος εἰμι θεοῖο·
> δώσειν γὰρ ποτ' ἔφησε δεκ' ἔθνεα παῖσιν Ἀβραάμ.

'For I have heard a word of God -namely, that once (He said) He would give ten nations to Abraham's children'.

11. *The divine reasons for the vengeance*

In his defense, afterwards, against his angry father Levi did *not* mention the fact that he was commissioned by God in a heavenly vision, but he does refer to it in his words to his children (6:8): ἀλλ' ἐγὼ εἶδον ὅτι ἀπόφασις θεοῦ ἦν εἰς κακὰ[92] ἐπὶ Σίκιμα. The heavenly vision had made him understand that God's sentence was *for evil* upon the Sichemites. In speaking of the vision he had only mentioned the fact that he had received the order to execute vengeance (5:3), but in this connection he also mentions the considerations that led to this divine order.

12. *The typical misconduct towards Dinah.*

The *first* consideration is mentioned in TL 6:8b:

> διότι ἤθελον καὶ τὴν Σάρραν ποιῆσαι ὃν τρόπον ἐποίησαν Δίναν τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν.

The text apparently hints at the incident of Gen.20:3f., which took place at Gerar in the land of the Philistines. TL 6:9b relates that the Lord had prevented them (καὶ κύριος ἐκώλυσεν αὐτούς), which is an echo of Gen 20:6, 'and it was I who prevented[93] them from sinning'. This story was clearly in the mind of the 'author' of the so-called α-recension, for he combines it with the parallel story of a similar incident at Gerar (Gen.26:1-11), by adding καὶ τὴν Ῥέβεκκαν[94]. One might adduce as an argument against such a connection that the Sichemites themselves were not involved in

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91 Theodotus, in Eusebius, *o.c.*, IX. 22,8f.; Mras, *o.c.*, 515:6-10 and 13-14; cf. the paraphrase *ibid.*, Mras, *o.c.*, 515:10-12.

92 For εἰς κακά, cf. 18:9; TB 4:3 (TA 1:9, 2:4) = לרעה, cf. 2 Chron. 18:7; Jer.21:10; 39:16.

93 LXX καὶ ἐφείσαμην for ואחשך.

94 So Ch.40:8-10 (=*c-h-i-j*).

either incident[95], but for the author of the Testaments the inhabitants of Shechem were representatives of the Canaanites, to which the Philistines belonged[96].

13. *The persecution of Abraham*

The *second* consideration is formulated in TL 6:9a:

καὶ οὕτως ἐδίωξαν Ἀβραὰμ τὸν πατέρα ἡμῶν ξένον ὄντα,...

Abraham was a גר, cf. Gen.23:4 a.o., a stranger—not a nomad, so Kee—in the sense of a guest in a foreign country. One should render the phrase with 'although he was a stranger'[97], since from the perspective of the author the gist of the phrase is, that they did not treat Abraham according to the rules of hospitality, cf. e.g. Exod.22:21, Deut.10:18f. The story of a persecution of Abraham is not found in Genesis. Abraham is mentioned among the persecuted in Lev.Rabba XXVII:5 (אברהם נרדף מפני נמרוד), but this refers to a period before his entrance in Canaan[98].

14. *The attacks on the flocks of Abraham*

The *third* consideration (6:9b) is formulated in a way that may puzzle the reader. The text is different in the manuscripts and editions:

| De Jonge[99] | Charles[100] |
|---|---|
| καὶ κατεπάτησαν τὰ ποίμνια | καὶ κατεπόνησαν τὰ ποίμνια |
| οἰκούμενα ὄντα ἐπ' αὐτόν... | οἰκούμενα ὄντα.... |

The decision between these two readings is a difficult one, the more so because the wording offers difficulties in both textual forms.

a) The first problem is that we do not know to which incident the

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95 Cf.Becker, *Testamente*, 51 n.8a; Charles, Testaments, 308n.

96 Cf. Sirach 50:26f. (below § 36). The Sichemites are mentioned here along with Philistines and Edomites (LXX: Samaritans).

97 Other interpretations of the participle clause: 'when' (Charles), 'while' (Hollander-De Jonge), 'because' ('weil', Riessler, Becker), 'who' ('der', Schnapp), 'as' (De Jonge).

98 Cf. Pseudo-Philo, *Lib.Ant. Bibl.*, 6:4-18 (ed. Kisch, *o.c.*, 127-130).

99 So J. 32:1f. (=*b* + *l*), *d m e a f* read ἐπ' αὐτόν with *b*, but κατεπόνησαν with *c-h-i-j*. De Jonge, *Testaments* (1978), 183, does not want to make a choice as to the verb.

100 So Ch. 40:12f. (= *c h i j*)

author refers, since it is 'also not in Genesis' (Charles). He must have had in mind a tradition of struggles about the flocks of Abraham[101], in which the animals were *trampled down* (I)[102] or *maltreated* (II)[103] by the inhabitants of Shechem or the Canaanites in general.

b) A second question is the meaning of ὀγκουμένα. Charles apparently understood the verb (ὀγκόομαι, pass. to be swollen) in the sense of pregnancy: 'when they were pregnant'[104]. The verb may have this meaning, cf. γαστρὸς ὄγκος (Euripides, *Ion*, 15). One might also think of ὀγκόω in the sense of 'endow with bulk', so as to mean that the flocks had become large. In both meanings the words 'to him' seem to be redundant. Schnapp rendered the word with 'die...schrien', apparently taking it as a form of ὀγκάομαι, 'to bray' (used of an ass[105]), cf. the reading ὀγκώμενα in *a d e*[106]. In adopting this interpretation he could make sense of the words ἐπ' αὐτόν, 'being crying *to him*' (Schnapp: 'zu ihm')[107], that is, to/for Abraham. Since the words ἐπ' αὐτόν seem redundant, if taken with the interpretation 'being pregnant', they are suppressed in the translations of those scholars who adopted them in their text, such as Hollander-De Jonge and De Jonge. The textual situation is so complicated here that one has to consider the possibility of a very early error in the text that has been solved in different ways in the tradition.

c) The third problem is that there is no incident of this kind in the history of Abraham. So one might be tempted whether the

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101 So explicitly in *d m*, τὰ ποίμνια αὐτοῦ.

102 Hollander-De Jonge: 'trampled', De Jonge: 'trampled on'; cf. Schnapp: 'zertraten'.

103 Charles: 'vexed'; Kee: 'harassed'; Riessler: 'plagten'; Becker: 'fügten ... Schaden zu'.

104 So De Jonge, Kee; Charles, 'when they were big with young' [which seems to have been misunderstood by Riessler, 'die Alten samt den Jungen' *sic*], cf. Hollander-De Jonge; Becker: 'als sie schwanger gingen'.

105 The word ὀγκμηθός is used of the braying of an ass and of the lowing of an ox.

106 Charles (40 app.) registrates the reading ὀγκόμενα for *b f g*, but there is no mention of it in J.32 app.

107 The words are found both in fam.I (*b*) and II (*d m e a f*) and were apparently in their ancestor. The difficulty of interpretation may have caused their suppression in the so-called α-recension.

author muddled things here and had in mind another story in Genesis dealing with Jacob. Strife between herdsmen could easily arise (cf. Gen.13:7f.), especially in the case of jealousy (cf. Gen. 26:12ff.). There is mention of such a strife in Jub.34:1-9, where the kings of the Amorites plundered the herds of Jacob and his sons[108], with as the ultimate result that Jacob slew them with the edge of the sword. The author of the Testaments knew this tradition, cf. TJ 3-7. Now the origin of a confusion may lie in Gen. 48:22, 'Moreover, I have given to you (*i.e.* Joseph) rather than to your brothers one mountain slope (שכם), which I took from the hands of the Amorites with my sword and my bow', in which שכם was understood as the city of Shechem, cf. *Midrash Rabba* on Genesis, XCVII:6 and earlier LXXX:10: 'And where do we find that our father Jacob took up his sword and bow?—In Shechem'[109].

15. *The strange name 'Jeblae'*

Even more complicated is the *fourth* consideration for the vengeance of the Lord. It tells us that someone who was born in the house of Abraham had been severely maltreated (6:9c):

καὶ Ἰεβλαε τὸν οἰκογενῆ αὐτοῦ σφόδρα αἰκίσαντο

In Gen.15:2 the Damascene Ἐλιέζερ is called the son of Μασεκ, the houseborn (τῆς οἰκογενοῦς μου) female slave of Abraham, which implies that Eliezer himself was a houseborn slave (cf. 15:3, ὁ δὲ οἰκογενής μου κληρονομήσει με). The fact that there seems no connection between the name Eliezer and Jeblae seems to exclude the possibility of an identification; but even if they were one and the same person, we do not know to what incident, in which Eliezer was involved, the author referred. Now we have to consider that the name Jeblae is not certain. It is the name in Ms.*b*, which was the basis for the most recent edition[110]. Charles[111], on the other hand, had adopted the name Ἐβλαην which is found in Ms.*c*.

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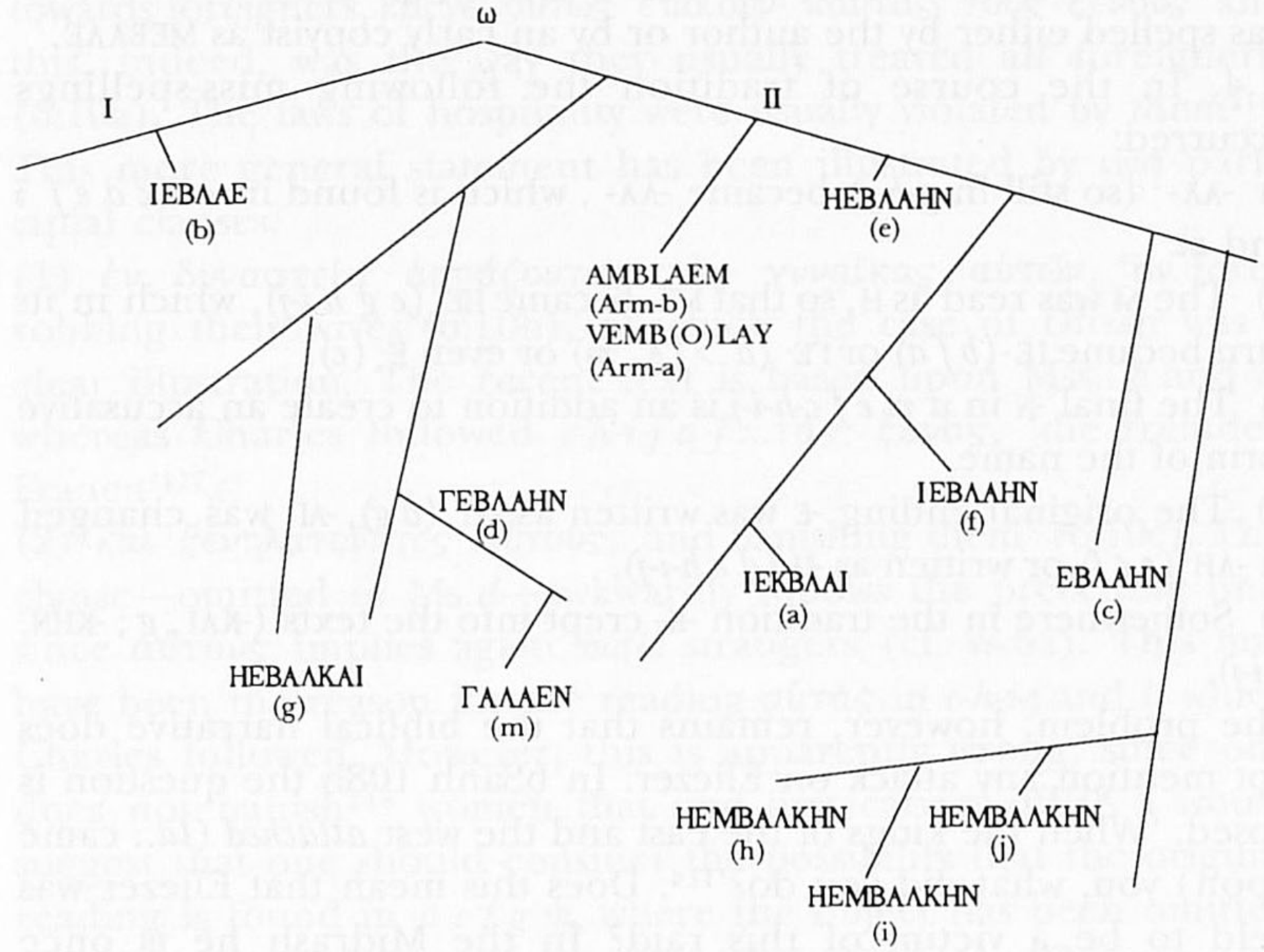
108 Charles, Jubilees, 64n.

109 Freedman, *Genesis* II, 742f., 944.

110 It was also adopted by Schnapp ('Jeblae'); it is found in the translations of De Jonge, Hollander-De Jonge.

111 Ch.40:13; it is found in the translations of Charles, Riessler and Kee; Becker reads 'Eblaem' which is not found in any manuscript, but cf. Armenian 'Emblaem' (Arm-β).

2. The variety in spelling is quite enormous in the manuscripts of fam.II. If we use the stemma of H. J. de Jonge[112] the situation may be visualized as follows:




3. There are a few elements that I–II have in agreement, namely -B-, which is found in *nine* manuscripts, and -Λ-, which is present in *ten* manuscripts. In II the final -N is found in *eight* texts, but one has to consider the possibility that it was added to create an accusative ending, so that the real endings were -AE, -AH, -AI, which may be variations of -AI=-E. The -M- in the subgroup *h-i-j* may have been part of the name in fam.II, since the Armenian has preserved this letter in both recensions. If we would assume that M, B, Λ, E were found in the original Greek text as elements of the name, one might consider the following solution: the Greek author found in some Hebrew or Aramaic source which he had at his disposal the following abbreviation 'מ 'ב 'אל, that is either אליעזר בר משק or אליעזר בן משק, 'Eliezer, son of Maseq'. This means that the original Greek text was nothing else than a back-

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112 H. J. de Jonge, The earliest traceable stage, 64.

ward transliteration MBΛE. One may compare the retrograd writing of יהוה as ΠΙΠΙ [113]. Now this form of the name, MBΛE, was difficult to understand, and therefore asked for new spellings of the name, by adding vowels. I take for a starting-point that the name was spelled either by the author or by an early copyist as MEBΛΛE.

4. In the course of tradition the following miss-spellings occurred:

a) -ΑΛ- (so still in *g-h-j*) became -ΛΑ- , which is found in *a b c d e f i* and *m*.

b) The M was read as H, so that ME- became HE (*e g h-i-j*), which in its turn became IE-(*b f a*) or ΓE- (*d* > ΓA, *m*) or even E- (*c*).

c) The final -N in *d m e f c-h-i-j* is an addition to create an accusative form of the name.

d) The original ending -E was written as -AI (*a g*), -AI was changed in -AH (*e c f*) or written as -H (*d e h-i-j*).

e) Somewhere in the tradition -K- crept into the texts (-KAI, *g*; -KHN, *h-i-j*).

The problem, however, remains that the biblical narrative does not mention any attack on Eliezer. In bSanh 108b the question is posed, 'When the kings of the east and the west *attacked* (*lit.*: came upon) you, what did you do?'[114]. Does this mean that Eliezer was held to be a victim of this raid? In the Midrash he is once identified with Lot, once with a person who helped Abraham in his attack on the intruders mentioned in Gen.14[115]. Anyhow, there may have been a tradition of an attack on Eliezer to which the author of TL alluded.

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[113] Mrs. Alice bij de Vaate (letter 22-06-92) gave me some examples of mirrorwise written names in inscriptions, e.g. שלום written as מולש, MAPIAM as MAIPAM, possibly with apotropaic purposes. See also F. Dornseiff, *Das Alphabet im Mystik und Magie*, Berlin [2]1925, 56, 63, 176.

[114] Cf. H. Freedman, *Sanhedrin* VII-XI, in: I. Epstein, *The Babylonian Talmud, Seder Nezikin* III, London (repr.1978), 747 (the reference is to Gen.14); again, according to bSanh 109b, Eliezer *was attacked*, apparently by Sodomites, *ibid.* 751.

[115] H. Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah Genesis* I, 366f. The first identification based on a specific interpretation of Ben Mesheq, the second on the numerical value of the name, which is alike the number of trained men that helped Abraham.

16. *The misbehaviour of the Sichemites in general*

The preceding description of their misbehaviour towards Abraham and his family is significant for their general attitude towards foreigners, καίγε οὕτως ἐποίουν πάντας τοὺς ξένους 'and this, indeed, was the way they usually treated all foreigners' (6:10a). The laws of hospitality were usually violated by them[116]. This more general statement has been illustrated by two participial clauses.

(1) ἐν δυναστείᾳ ἁρπάζοντες τὰς γυναῖκας αὐτῶν, 'by force robbing their wives'(6:10b), of which the case of Dinah was a clear illustration. The recent text is based upon Mss. *b* and *d*, whereas Charles followed *c-h-i-j a f* ...τὰς ξένας, 'die fremden Frauen'[117].

(2) καὶ ξενηλατοῦντες αὐτούς, 'and banishing them' (6:10c). This clause—omitted in Ms.*d*—awkwardly follows the preceding one, since αὐτούς implies again *male* strangers (cf. vs.6a). This may have been the reason for the reading αὐτάς in *c-h-i-j* and *l*, which Charles followed. However, this is apparently wrong, since one does not banish[118] women that one first carries off[119]. I would suggest that one should consider the possibility that the original reading is found in *a e f g m*, where the object has been omitted (ξενηλατέω in itself meaning 'to banish foreigners'). This gave rise to the complements αὐτούς and αὐτάς in other manuscripts[120].

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116 M. de Jonge, Notes, 260, finds here a reference to future atrocities; whether the difference between (9) καὶ οὕτως and (10) καίγε οὕτως is a sufficient argument (*ibid.*n.48), I am not sure of.

117 J.32:3f., which reading is followed by Charles in his translation, also by Schnapp and Kee; Riessler renders with 'die Weiber' (αὐτῶν omitted in g l e); contra Ch.41:1f., whose reading is followed by Becker (51) who finds in the β-text a clarification of the α-text. Most translations are ambivalent here.

118 I do not understand Kee's rendering 'and murdered them', that is, the wives.

119 Charles is aware of the difficulty: he suggests that there is here a misinterpretation of נדח, ידיחון, which is ambivalent: 'they banished them' or 'they seduced them', that is, to idololatry.

120 M. de Jonge (letter 19-05-92) objected to this solution on the basis of the stemma, suggesting that the omission was due to an attempt to solve the awkwardness of the text in fam.II (αὐτάς). I do not think that the stemma really denies my solution.

## III

### 17. *The finding of the shield*

After the visionary experience Levi went home: καὶ ὡς ἠρχόμην πρὸς τὸν πατέρα μου, εὗρον ἀσπίδα χαλκῆν..., and while I was going[121] to my father, I found a brass shield' (6:1a)[122]. The finding of the shield is, in fact, a confirmation of what happened in the vision. There he was brought from the mountain back to earth and was presented with 'armour and sword', before he got the command to avenge Dinah (5:3)—that is, still within the vision, which ends in 5:7. The wording is the following: καὶ ἔδωκέ μοι ὅπλον καὶ ῥομφαίαν, litt. 'and he gave me *armour* and sword'. The general word ὅπλον usually denotes the protecting armour, or cuirass. However, the expression ὅπλον καὶ ῥομφαίαν is found in Ps.75(76):3 LXX for Hebrew מגן וחרב, 'shield and sword'. "Οπλον is a not unusual rendering of מגן, cf. 3 Kgdms 10:17, 14:26f. a.o., and even in the expression ὅπλα καὶ ἀσπίδας, Jer.26(46):3 (מגן וצנה), ὅπλα renders exactly this word[123]. Since the author apparently wished to distinguish between ὅπλον and ἀσπίς, but at the same time wanted to make a connection between the finding of the ἀσπίς and the ὅπλον of the vision, one might differentiate between 'shield' and 'buckler'[124], rather than with 'armour' and 'shield'[125]. The author used the finding of the shield as a confirmation and reminder of the reality of the task with which Levi was charged in the vision. It was a clear sign that God had chosen him for this task and that God, through his guardian angel, would protect him. God gave him a shield, just as in the story of Judith

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[121] Not 'ich...kam', so Schnapp, Becker, cf. Kee; the idea is that he was still on his way (imperfect tense), possibly in the mountain area, *not* after having come to his father.

[122] For a "brass shield' cf. 1 Kgdms. 10:27; 2 Chron.12:10.

[123] This interpretation of the word as 'shield' (so Charles, Schnapp, Riessler, Kee, Hollander-De Jonge) is already found in the Armenian (M. Stone, *Testament*, 70:9, 138:5f.).

[124] M. De Jonge and Hollander-De Jonge: twice 'shield'.

[125] Cf. 'Rüstung und Schwert', J. Thomas, Aktuelles, 80; M. de Jonge, *Testaments* (1953) 51, renders V:3 'an armour and a sword' (cf. Notes,259), and did so with purpose, cf. 143 n.68, 'Note that in V:3 Levi does not receive a shield'.

we are told that God gave a *sword* in Simeon's hand (9:2, Συμεών, ᾧ ἔδωκας ἐν χειρὶ ῥομφαίαν εἰς ἐκδίκησιν ἀλλογενῶν)[126].

18. *Keeping the words in his heart*

That Levi saw in the the finding a confirmation and reminder of the heavenly charge is implied in the following words: καὶ συνετήρουν τοὺς λόγους τούτους ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ μου (TL 6:2). This belongs to biblical language, as can be seen from Sirach 13:2, Dan 4:28 LXX, 7:28 Θ, cf. Lk 2:19, where similar phrases are found[127]. What is the function of the phrase in this connection? One might compare TL 8:19, after the second vision, where Levi says, 'And I hid this *also* in my heart, and told it not to any man upon the earth'[128]. The phrase has obviously the following functions. First it underlines the fact that the finding of the buckler made him aware of the importance of the visionary experience in which he received the task of avenging the crime against Dinah. Secondly, it makes clear that he could not speak publicly about such a personal experience. This in its turn has the function to explain, why Levi in his defense against Jacob's reproach after the massacre did not appeal to the divine command, which was given in the vision, to justify the military action[129]. Meanwhile, this vision remains the main factor that led him to his military campaign[130].

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126 Hanhart, *Judith*, 104:7f.

127 Cf. W. C. van Unnik, Die rechte Bedeutung der Worten treffen, Lukas II:19, in *Sparsa Collecta* I, Leiden 1973, 72-91.

128 J 35:2f.; cf. Bodl.Fragm. col.a:12f., Ch.246:12f., with the same text, except for the last three words.

129 I do not see why Becker, *Untersuchungen*, 257f., 261 ('Dass Levi...auch noch den Auftrag erhält, Dina zu rächen (5,3b-4) ist unprogrammatisch und passt nicht auf zu 6,3ff.') emphasizes a contradiction here.

130 Van Unnik, rechte Bedeutung, 88f., correctly interprets the phrase not only in the sense of 'bewahren', 'sondern auch "darauf acht geben und es dann ausführen"', but this interpretation neglects the author's use of the expression to explain Levi's silence about the vision in his defense against Jacob's complaints.

19. *Levi's advice in the family's council*

After coming home, Levi spoke with Jacob and Ruben (TL 6:3a):

ἐγὼ συνεβούλευσα τῷ πατρί μου καὶ Ῥουβὴμ τῷ ἀδελφῷ μου...

'I gave advice to my father and to Ruben, my brother...'[131], suggests a family council with Jacob as the chief of the family and Ruben as the eldest brother[132]. Levi (ἐγώ) takes the initiative by giving advice[133]. There is, however, a problem as to what his suggestion included. The introduction of his proposal is that *he* should tell the sons of Hemor (ἵνα εἴπῃ τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἐμμώρ)...', followed by the contents of the advice. It seems likely, that the author wanted to say that Jacob should tell them. In the text of Gen.34:13ff., however, it is the sons of Jacob that negotiate with Shechem and Hemor, at least in the Massoretic text; the Septuaginta follow the M.T. in vs.13, but in 14 Simeon and Levi are introduced as the persons that deal with the Sichemites. If our interpretation of εἴπῃ is correct, TL agrees with Theodotus who also makes Jacob the negotiator. Remarkably enough, Kee renders 'that they should tell', which agrees with Ms.a, ἵνα εἴπωσι, a reading apparently caused by the fact that Levi gave his counsel to both Jacob and Ruben. Charles ('to bid') avoided the difficulty that one might feel here by using an infinitive.

20. *Two readings—a textcritical problem*

If we ask, what Jacob told to the sons of Hemor, we are left with a difficult choice between two completely different texts, which in their turn offer two different interpretations.

1. The first interpretation starts from the text in 6:3b: τοῦ περιτμηθῆναι αὐτούς, 'that they must be circumcised'. This is the text of all manuscripts (except for *c*), adopted by Schnapp and Becker ('sie sollten sich beschneiden lassen'), De Jonge and

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[131] J.31:3; the transition without καί is somewhat harsh, which may have caused the reading καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο instead of ἐγώ in *c-h-i-j*, followed by Ch.39:6f.

[132] Cf. an analogous text in TJ 13:4; in our text Ch.39:7 adds τῷ *ante*, omits τῷ ἀδελφῷ μου *post* Ῥουβήμ, followed by Kee, not by Charles, Schnapp, Riessler, Becker, De Jonge a.o.

[133] Rather than 'Ich beriet mit' (Schnapp, Riessler) or 'ich hielt Rat mit' (Becker).

Hollander-De Jonge. It closely follows the biblical narrative (Gen. 34:13-17), where the sons of Jacob planned their stratagem with the ultimate purpose to destroy the Sichemites, as appears from vs.25f. All men of the city should have to receive circumcision. As 'reason' was mentioned to Hemor the fact that it was not allowed to give their sister into marriage with someone who was not circumcised (vs.15). From the context we may deduce that Jacob agreed about the idea of circumcision, but did not share the design of his sons (vs.30). This biblical story is followed by the Targums, although they replace *ruse* (מרמה) by *wisdom* (O & J: חוכמא) or even *much wisdom* (N: חוכמתהון סגי)[134]. The necessity of circumcision is also expressed by Theodotus, when he relates that Jacob—*not* his sons—said that he could not give his daughter in marriage with Shechem before all the inhabitants of the city had become Jews by circumcision (πρὶν ἄν ἢ πάντας τοὺς οἰκοῦντας τὰ Σίκιμα περιτεμνομένους Ἰουδαίσαι)[135]. The idea is here also that Jacob really wanted to negotiate, but that the sons abused the situation.

2. The second interpretation is based upon the reading of Ms. *c*, which is accepted by Charles, namely τοῦ μὴ περιτμηθῆναι αὐτούς, 'that they should not be circumcised'[136]. The idea is here that Levi, as a consequence of the heavenly vision, had planned to attack the Sichemites. He knew that God was on his side and would give victory. So he wished not to become involved in the stratagem of his brothers of whom *Ruben* was the representative, nor did he join the plans of *Jacob* to Judaize the people of Shechem, which would exclude the possibility of war against them. So he gave his advice to both Ruben and Jacob that they should not be circumcized for two different reasons. Afterwards it turns out that the fact that the killing took place after the

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[134] Cf. Sperber, *Pentateuch*, 56; Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, 63; A. Díez Macho, *Neophyti 1, Targum Palestiniense* I, Genesis, Madrid-Barcelona 1968, 227; for the use of this other word one might think of the natural hesitation with respect to guile, cf. § 5 above. On the other hand, the reference to Simeon in Judith 9:1-4 may have been the legitimation for the ruse of Judith, cf. Pummer, Genesis 34, 181.

[135] Theodotus, in: Eusebius, *o.c.*, IX.22,5, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 514:15f..

[136] Ch. 39:7f.; so in the translations of Charles (308 app.), Riessler (1162) and Kee (790 app.).

Sichemites having received circumcision aroused Jacob's anger (TL 6:6). But this—the author says—had not been planned by Levi, to the contrary.

21. *The negative judgment about the ruse*

Before we will choose between the two alternatives, we have to show that the requirement of circumcision as a מרמה was a problem for hellenistic Jewish authors. Even the author of Jubilees, who does not make a secret of the ruse ('and they spoke to them with evil intent and dealt deceitfully with them and beguiled them'[137]), suppresses every mention of the actual circumcision. One cannot conclude much from the descriptions of Demetrius and Pseudo-Philo because of their abbreviating way of story telling, but one has to register that they did not relate the circumcision story at all[138]. However, Josephus, who amply describes the negotiation between Jacob and Hemor, does not mention any condition and evidently suppressed any reference to circumcision. When he tells us about the attack, he does not say that the Sichemites were defenceless due to the pain contracted by circumcision, but he reports that the raid took place while the Sichemites made a feast[139]. A similar idea is found in the description of Philo, when he writes that Simeon and Levi 'overthrew them when still occupied in the pleasure-loving, passion-loving toil of the uncircumcised'[140]. Of course, one cannot deduce it merely from the words ἀπεριτμήτῳ πόνῳ which he uses here, for the Targums denote the Sichemites as ערלאין, in spite of their circumcision[141]). The fact , however, that Philo never mentions circumcision may suggest that he had hesitations to mention it.

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137 Jub 30:3, Charles, *Jubilees*, 179.

138 Contra Pummer, Genesis 34, 179; Demetrius (Eusebius, *o.c.*, IX,21.9, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 509:19-21, 510:1-3); Pseudo-Philo, *Antiquit.*, 8:7 (ed. Kisch, *o.c.*, 134:4-8). Collins, The Epic of Theodotus, 95f., wrongly assumes that even Theodotus implies that circumcision did not take place, cf. Pummer, *o.*c., 182, n.15, contra Collins).

139 Josephus, *Antiquitates* I, 338-340, ed. Thackeray, *o.c.*, I, 162.

140 Philo, *Migr. Abr.*, 224; ed. Colson-Whitaker, *Philo* IV, 264:12f.

141 Cf. Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, 64; Díez Macho, *Neofiti I*, 231.

22. *The text of TL 6:3b again*

It is obvious that the author of TL did not suppress the circumcision fraud. It was exactly the reason for Jacob's anger afterwards. The question is whether the Sichemites were circumcised due to Levi's advice. The strong support in favour of the first reading, all existing manuscripts except one and its occurrence in fam.I and II, plead for the omission of μή. Still I have the feeling that one cannot discard the other reading—Ms. *c*—without considering what pleads for it. If we suppose that the second reading, τοῦ μὴ περιτμηθῆναι αὐτούς, might have been the original reading, one might suggest that the following thoughts were in the author's mind:

a) There was a plan to require circumcision, as the biblical narrative related. This was made either for enabling a lawful marriage (Jacob) or for preparing the best conditions for a raid on the city of Shechem (Ruben).

b) Levi came home after the vision, heard about the plans. He rejected them, since he hated what was done to his sister. He could not give approval to a lawful marriage, since he knew through the vision that he had to kill the Sichemites. Nor could he agree with the deceitful plans of his brothers, i.c. Ruben, for he knew through the angelic message that God would assist him in the battle, so that there was no need for a ruse.

c) When Levi performed the task ordered by God himself, he killed the people that were—against his will—circumcised. This was not his fault. His fault was that he had done the killing contrary to Jacob's will.

These considerations may have been in the author's mind, if the second reading is correct. Personally, I am inclined to follow here the one manuscript against the majority. The suppression of the negation in most manuscripts can easily be explained as a correction by one or more copyists based upon their knowledge of the biblical narrative that the inhabitants of the city were circumcised. Moreover, the consideration that the text of the Testament itself presupposed that circumcision had taken place may have been influential in the course of textual tradition[142]. If I suggest

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142 Cf. also J. Becker, *Untersuchungen*, 269, 'mit dem Vorschlag, die

here that the Testament of Levi as we have it now in the Greek form presented this peculiar reading, I have to add that this was true for the Greek redaction of this document, not for the sources used by the author which may have contained a different story related to the biblical account[143].

23. *The zeal of Levi*

1. Levi gives a reason for his advice that the Sichemites should not be circumcised. He wished to revenge the humiliation of Dinah (6:3c):

ὅτι ἐζήλωσα διὰ τὸ βδέλυγμα ὃ ἐποίησαν ἐν Ἰσραήλ,

'for I was zealous because of the abomination which they had performed in Israel (or: done to Israel)'. This is the only place in which the author of the Testaments uses the verb in its positive sense (cf. also 'the zeal of God' in TA 4:5)[144]. It places Levi among those who have distinguished themselves by zeal for God, such as Pinehas, Elijah and Mattathias[145], who had taken a stand for the purity of Israel.

2. The author had, of course, in mind the crime of the rape of Dinah, but this does not mean that one should follow Charles text ὃ ἐποίησαν ἐπὶ τῇ ἀδελφῇ μου, with support of *c-h-i-j*. The author used a biblical expression here (§ 24).

3. The zeal of Levi is emphasized here, as has been done by other authors. In Jub.30:18, we read '...that Levi and his sons may be blessed for ever, for he was zealous to execute righteousness, judgment and vengeance on all those who arouse against Israel'[146]. In the treatise attributed to Philo, *De Sampsone*, this zeal is attributed to both Simeon and Levi, who received the spirit of zeal

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Beschneidung... nicht zuzulassen', contra Becker, *Testamente*, 51.

143 Cf. the Aramaic fragment of Cambridge, col.a:18ff., which seems to imply that Levi was involved in the ruse of circumcision, Ch.245; cf. J. C. Greenfield – M. E. Stone, Remarks on the Aramaic Testament of Levi from the Geniza, *RB* 86 (1979) 214-230, esp.217f.

144 Elsewhere it has a negative meaning, TR 6:5, TS 2:6, TG 7:4, TB 4:4, cf. ζῆλος in TR 3:5, 6:4, TS 2:7, 4:5.9, TJ 13:3 etc.

145 Cf. Hollander-De Jonge, *Testaments*, 147 ad VI:3; Pummer, Gen.34, 180f.; Haupt, *Testament*, 24f.

146 Charles, *Jubilees*, 183.

and proved that in the killing of the Sichemites[147], and the same is true for the *Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer*, which memorate that Simeon and Levi were moved by a great zeal, that they were exceedingly zealous[148]. Judith 9:4 attributes this zeal to all the sons of Jacob, the beloved children of God, who were zealous with the zeal of God, ἐζήλωσαν τὸν ζῆλόν σου, and by their action made clear how abominable the defilement had been, καὶ ἐβδελύξαντο μίασμα αἵματος αὐτῶν[149].

24. *The abomination*

Levi spoke of his zeal on account of the *abomination* that was performed in Israel, or against Israel. Βδέλυγμα has been used to denote sexual offences in the cases of Ruben and Bilha (TR 3:12), Juda and Thamar (TJ 12:8), on the prostitution of Jews with pagan women (TD 5:5)[150], and with respect to idololatry (TZ 9:5). Sexual sins and idololatry are denoted that way in Lev.18 and 20. The word does not, however, occur in the biblical narrative of Gen.34, but it is found in the Neofiti Targum of Gen.34:7, where the 'folly' (נבלה)—because they had wrought *folly* in Israel—has been rendered with מרחקא, 'abomination', where other Targums have rendered נבלה with קלנא, 'disgraceful act' (TgO, TgJ)[151], cf. LXX: ἄσχημον. The idea of foolishness present in the Hebrew word is rendered by the key word of Philo's exegesis ἀφροσύνη, cf. § 36.

If Gen.34:7 was, indeed, the source for TL 6:3c, it is advisable to read with the majority of manuscripts 'in Israel', and not, with *c-h-i-j* ,'towards my sister' of Charles's edition[152]. Charles defends his text exactly with the same reference to Gen.34:7, assuming that the reading 'in Israel' is a *secondary* variation due to this OT text.

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147 Pseudo-Philo, *De Sampsone*, 25, ed. F. Siegert, *Drei hellenistisch-jüdische Predigten*, Tübingen 1980, 67.

148 G. Friedländer, *Pirke de Rabbi Eliezer*, 287, 369.

149 Hanhart, *Judith*, 105:6f.

150 Cf. Jub.30:11-16, where promiscuity of Jews and pagans is described as abominable to God and Israel, Charles, *Jubilees*, 181f.

151 Díez Macho, *Neofiti I*, 225; Aberbach-Grossfeld, *o.c.*, 201; Ginsburger, *o.c.*, 63.

152 Ch.39:9 (app.: the other reading 'may be due to Gen.xxxiv.7), cf. the translations of Charles (308), Kee (790), Becker (51, cf. n. 3b: concerning the other reading:'Einfluss aus Gen.34,7').

One cannot see, how this could happen, since the LXX (ἄσχημον) differs from TL (βδέλυγμα). The author rather used the biblical phrase 'an abomination in Israel', whereas a copyist (or the author of a recension) objected to the idea that the incident happened *in* Israel (ἐν taken in its local sense[153]), and therefore corrected the passage into a text which explicitly told what had happened: it was done to Levi's sister.

## IV

### 25. *The Revenge*

The divine order to execute vengeance[154] was meant for Shechem, who had performed the scandalous act. Shechem, however, dragged others down in his fall. First of all his father Hemor, the chief of the city (Gen.33:19, 34:2), as can be seen already in TL 2:2:

...ὅτε ἐποίησα μετὰ Συμεὼν τὴν ἐκδίκησιν...ἀπὸ τοῦ Ἐμμώρ...,

a phrase which underlines the initiative of Levi. He takes Simeon along with him to act in his revenge. Afterwards, it turns out that it is actually Simeon who slew Hemor (cf.§ 28) Not only Shechem and Hemor became victims of the raid, but *all* the inhabitants of the city became involved in the punishment (cf. § 29). This is already implied in a phrase that occurs in the narrative of the heavenly vision, 5:4, which asks for closer examination.

### 26. *A parenthesis?*

1. Unexpectedly, just after the command to punish Shechem, the text reads (5:4a):

καὶ συνετέλεσα τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἐμμώρ,

a phrase that reminds us of an addition to 12:5 in the Aramaic text, 'when I killed Shechem *and finished off the workers of violence*'[155].

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[153] The author may have taken it in the sense 'die sie *an* Israel verübten' (Schnapp).

[154] The term ἐκδίκησις is the key word here, 2:2, 3:2f., 5:3; cf. Judith 9:2, Joseph and Aseneth 23:14, and Jub.30:18.

[155] Ch.254, Bodl.Fragm. col.c:17f.

The words of this addition, וגמרת לעבדי חמסא, differ from the Greek text in the object (= לבני חמור), but agree in the verb, גמרת = συνετέλεσα. Only, in the context of chapter 12, the past tense is understandable, whereas in 5:4 the aorist can only surprise us.

2. One may question, whether the speaker is Levi. The phrase immediately follows the angel's pronouncement that he will assist Levi, since God has sent him. The logical inference would be that the angel is the subject of the phrase. But then the question is: when did the angel kill the Sichemites? Did the revenge which Levi had to execute already take place as a foreshadowing in the celestial spheres. But what does 'at that time' mean in that case? Or should one read καὶ συντελέσω with Ms.*l*, cf. also Arm-α: 'and I will cut (them) down'[156]. Then it is obvious that the angel would act at the same time that Levi would carry out the order. However, the future tense[157] is most probably a later correction of the difficult aorist.

3. The usual interpretation, that it is Levi who speaks here[158], seems to be preferable. Then the aorist implies that what Levi says here is to be taken as a parenthesis[159]. Levi interrupts his account of the vision to make clear to his children that he—as already indicated in 2:2—had carried out his task. 'At that time' refers in that case to the day of revenge. This seems more likely than considering the possibility that the author wanted to say that Levi, in the spirit, had already principally finished off the adversaries at the moment of the angelic command.

4. The 'sons of Hemor' is a biblical phrase. In Gen.33:19, Jacob having arrived at the city of Shechem bought a piece of land from the sons of Hemor, the father of Shechem, cf. also Josh.24:32. It may denote Hemor's subjects, the citizens of Shechem, cf. אנשי חמור in Judg. 9:28, 'the men of Hemor, the father of Shechem'.

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156 Stone, *Testament*, 139 tr.; 138: *ew es kotorec'ic'*. Arm-β is dubious, cf. Stone, *o.c.*, 71, n. ad V:4.

157 One might consider the possibility that the author drew on a Hebrew source with a perfectum consecutivum, which he rendered with an aorist instead of a future tense.

158 Cf. e.g., De Jonge, Notes, in *Studies*, 260; Hollander-De Jonge, *Testaments*, 143f.

159 Ms. *k* omits the sentence. As far as I see, nobody has suggested that this was an early gloss.

The Septuagint reading of the passage in Josh.24 has τῶν Ἀμορραίων τῶν κατοικούντων ἐν Σικίμοις. This is a confusion of בני חמור and the Amorites (אמרי), which could have been suggested by Gen. 48:22, where Joseph is presented with a 'portion' (שכם) 'which—Jacob says—I took out of the hand of the *Amorite* with my sword and my bow'. In one of the midrashic expositions[160] the 'portion' is identified as the city of Shechem, the Amorite being Hemor the father of Shechem, because the Hevites were to be reckoned among the Amorites[161].

27. *The heavenly tablets*

The interpretation of 5:4a is having some impact on the understanding of 5:4b,

καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν ταῖς πλαξὶ τῶν οὐρανῶν,

'as it is written in the tablets of heaven'. What did the author understand by these tables?

1. The more obvious interpretation is that Levi refers to heavenly records, in which God's decrees with respect to past and future of his creation are inscribed and fixed[162]. 'Heavenly tablets' are also mentioned in the retelling of the Shechem episode of Jub.30. On these tables the good deeds of men such as Levi (30:19f.) and the other sons of Jacob (30:23) are recorded, but also the evil deeds which effected the destruction of the evil-doers (30:22). This is true for the Sichemites in particular, 'for judgment is ordained in heaven against them'(30:5)[163]. So it is possible that Levi, of whom the author of Joseph and Aseneth says that 'as a wise man and prophet saw the writings in heaven'[164], referred here to these heavenly records, cf. TA 7:5. In this interpretation the reference means that the act of Levi was decreed by the foreordaining will of God.

2. The problem is, however, that Levi in this parenthetical

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160 Freedman, *Midrash Rabbah Genesis* II, 943f.

161 The Armenian version of TL 2:2, VI:4—not V:4—has also Amorites, cf. Stone, *Testament*, 56, 74, 132, 140.

162 Cf. Kee (790n.) who adopts this interpretation, although he adopts a different text.

163 Cf. Charles, Jubilees, 183f., 180.

164 Joseph and Aseneth 22:13, tr. Burchard (*Joseph und Aseneth*, 703, n.13b).

sentence refers to the past (aor.). He does not say that he would destroy the people on the basis of the heavenly records, but he seems to refer to documents of which his children could know: I have finished them off, as you may know from the records. Just as the heavenly tables in TA 2:10 seem to refer to the commandments of the Mosaic law[165], they may here refer to the history as documented in the story of Genesis. This may have been the opinion of the author of the so-called α-recension, represented in *c-h-i-j*, and followed by Charles in his text: καθὼς γέγραπται ἐν ταῖς πλαξὶ τῶν πατέρων[166]. 'The tablets of the Fathers'[167] are clearly a secondary interpretation of the heavenly tablets. Even in the Book of Jubilees the heavenly tablets sometimes seem to refer to the heavenly will of God as expressed in the written law, for example against promiscuity of Jews and pagans (30:9, 11f.).

3. There is an ambiguity in the expression. One cannot deny the possibility that the law and history of the Mosaic books are referred to. The mere fact that these Scriptures were not yet written in the time of Levi and his children cannot be a conclusive argument against this idea. The author may have had a different understanding of the growth of tradition that lies behind the written records of Moses. In Jub.30:21, the author says that God has written down everything for Moses to say it to the people of Israel, and to this belongs the history of the Sichemites (30:12) which God wrote for him in 'the words of the Law', so that Moses could testify about it to Israel. This Law is different from the heavenly tablets (30:19, 22f.)[168] in which sins and good deeds are recorded. One may assume the possibility that the author of the Testaments had the view that the records of the people were already written before Moses wrote them down. There was, at least, already a tradition that had been written down, cf. TZ 9:5[169].

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165 Cf. Exod.24:12, 32:15f.; Deut.9:9.11.15; *c-h-i-j* have ἐν ταῖς πλαξὶ τῶν ἐντολῶν here.

166 Ch.38:2-4, followed by Kee (although he interprets it differently) and Becker; Charles renders here surprisingly with 'heavenly tablets', but cf. his note.

167 Cf. TZ 9:5.

168 Charles, *Jubilees*, 180f.,182.

169 Cf. Hollander-De Jonge, *Testaments*, 39f.

## 28. *The Attack of Levi and Simeon*

1. The first military operations were performed by Levi and Simeon. The heavenly order was to deal with Shechem, and so he did (12:5): ...ὅτε ἀπέκτεινα τὸν Συχέμ, cf. the Aramaic text: כדי קתלית אנה לש[כם], 'when I killed Shechem'[170]. This had already been said in 6:4, where Levi tells his children: κἀγὼ ἀνεῖλον τὸν Συχὲμ ἐν πρωτοῖς, καὶ Συμεὼν τὸν Ἐμμώρ. Levi takes the initiative and Simeon follows him. This is different from the biblical account, 'and on the third day, when they were sore, two of Jacob's sons, *Simeon and Levi*, ...took their swords and came upon the city[171] unawares, and killed *all* the males. They slew also *Hemor and Shechem*...with the edge of the sword' (Gen.34:25f.). The author of TL concluded from the order of the names that Simeon killed Hemor, Levi Shechem; the fact that Levi killed Schechem first is due to the role which the author gave Levi in this Testament.

2. This order differs from other retellings. Demetrius writes, ἐξαλλομένους δὲ τοὺς Ἰσραὴλ υἱούς, Συμεῶνα μὲν..., Λευὶν δὲ..., ἀποκτεῖναι τόν τε Ἐμμὼρ καὶ Συχὲμ τὸν υἱὸν αὐτοῦ καὶ πάντας τοὺς ἄρσενας...[172], a text which closely follows the biblical wording here. Theodotus relates—according to the quotation from Alexander Polyhistor in Eusebius—the attack in this way: τὸν οὖν Λευὶν καὶ τὸν Συμεῶνα εἰς τὴν πόλιν καθωπλισμένους ἐλθεῖν καὶ πρῶτα μὲν τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντας ἀναιρεῖν, ἔπειτα δὲ καὶ τὸν Ἐμμὼρ καὶ τὸν Συχὲμ φονεῦσαι[173]. At first sight, this seems to suggest that Levi took the initiative, being the first one mentioned here, whereas the parallelism seems to imply that Levi killed Hemor and Simeon Sichem. However, the following quotation from the poem of Theodotus itself makes it clear, that Simeon started the battle—Ὡς τότε δὴ Συμεὼν μὲν Ἐμὼρ ὥρουσεν ἐπ' αὐτὸν πλῆξέ τέ οἱ κεφαλήν...— whereas Levi is mentioned as second attacker—τόφρα δὲ καὶ Λευὶν μένος ἄσχετος—, who dealt with Shechem—...Συχὲμ ἄσπετα μαργήναντα. ἤλασε δε κληῖδα μέσην, δῦ δὲ ξίφος ὀξὺ σπλάγχνα κτλ[174].

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170 Cf. J.39:5f.; Ch. 52:5f.; and Ch. 254, Bodl. Fragm. col.d:17.

171 LXX: εἰσῆλθον εἰς τὴν πόλιν, cf. Ms.*d*, καὶ εἰσελθὼν ἐγώ...

172 Demetrius, in Eusebius, *Praep.Evang.* IX,21.9, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 510:1-3.

173 Theodotus, in Eusebius, *Praep.Evang.* IX,22.10, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 515:23.

174 *Ibid.*, IX,22.11, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 516:1-7; cf. P. W. van der Horst, *Joods-*

3. The Testament of Levi and Theodotus relate that Levi and Simeon restricted themselves in the killing of Hemor and Shechem, contrary to the biblical narrative. This latter text is followed by Demetrius, who says that they also killed *all* the men of the city, as does, for example, the text in *Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer*, 'and each man—that is Simeon and Levi—took his sword and slew all the men of Shechem'[175].

29. *The other sons of Jacob*

1. TL 6:5 relates how the other sons of Jacob were involved in the attack against the Sichemites. They came after the killing of the chief and his son:

> καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐλθόντες οἱ ἀδελφοὶ ἐπάταξαν τὴν πόλιν ἐν στόματι ῥομφαίας,

This is different from the biblical account, in which the brothers came upon the slain and plundered the city (Gen.34:27-29). TL combines the fact that the brothers entered (LXX: οἱ δὲ υἱοὶ Ἰακὼβ εἰσῆλθον) and ransacked the city (LXX: τὴν πόλιν) with a textual element borrowed from the episode in which only Levi and Simeon figured (34:26), 'with the edge of the sword' (LXX: ἐν στόματι μαχαίρας)[176].

2. As far as I can see TL is unique in presenting this state of affairs. The Hebrew text is followed by the Targums, *and* by Jubilees, cf. Jub.30:4, 'Simeon and Levi...slew all the men whom they found in it and left not a single remaining in it'[177]. Demetrius ascribes to Simeon and Levi also the killing of the males inhabitants (πάντας τοὺς ἄρσενας)[178]. Alexander Polyhistor tells us that Simeon and Levi killed those whom they met on their way (τοὺς ἐντυγχάνοντες), and after that Hemor and Shechem. In a quotation from the original poem of Theodotus it is said that Simeon killed Hemor, and after that still others (lit. ἐπεὶ πόνος

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*hellenistische Poëzie*, 66f.

175 Friedländer, *Pirqe*, 288 (ch.38), cf. *ibid.*, 369.

176 Gen.34:26 is the first verse in which the expression לפי חרב occurs. The LXX wording with μαχαίρα is found in all Mss. of TL except for Ms. *b l m*. See for the sword Jub.30:5f., Judith 9:2, Joseph and Aseneth 23:13.

177 Charles, *Jubilees*, 180; cf. Jub.30:5, 17, 18.

178 Demetrius, in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* IX,21.9, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 510:2f.

ἄλλος ὀρώρει). In the paraphrase of Alexander Polyhistor, again, we are told that afterwards the other brothers came and assisted Simeon and Levi in their action, but then it is clear that they mainly destroyed (ἐκπορθῆσαι) the city and took the booty[179]. Josephus reports that the two sons came and first (πρώτοις) killed the guards in their sleep, then all other men (πᾶν ἄρρεν), including the king and his son[180]. In Pseudo-Philo a similar account is found, 'et ingressi sunt filii Iacob, Simeon et Levi, et interfecerunt civitatem eorum in ore gladii'[181]. And in a treatise *De Sampsone*, ascribed to Philo, the killing of the Sichemites is also attributed to Simeon and Levi[182]. It seems to be also the assumption of the author of Joseph and Aseneth that Levi and Simeon did all the killing.

3. TL does not give the number of those who were slain. In Joseph and Aseneth 23:2, the son of Pharao acknowledges the strength of Simeon and Levi, who had destroyed the city of the Sichemites and slew with their two swords thirty thousand soldiers[183]. One might be tempted to find a clue in the Testaments, when one hears, in TJ 4:1, Judah say, 'In the south there came upon us a greater war than *that in Shechem*'. Does this refer to the episode reported in TL? In that case the number would be much smaller than that given in Joseph and Aseneth, for in in that greater war Judah and the others pursued a thousand men and killed two hundred of them, and destroyed four kings[184]. However, it is more plausible that TJ 4:1a deals with a battle that has been reported in TJ 3:1-10, where the war is said to have been waged against the kings of the Canaanites, a war that has been connected with Shechem elsewhere (Gen.48:22, cf. §§ 26.30).

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179 Theodotus, in Eusebius, *Praep. Evang.* IX, 22.10, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 515:22; IX,22.11 (516:3) and ibid. (516:8f.).

180 Josephus, *Antiquitates*, I, 340 (xxi:1), ed. Thackeray, o.c., 162:18-23.

181 Pseudo-Philo, *Lib.Ant.Bibl.* 8:7, ed. Kisch, *o.c.*, 134:6-8.

182 [Pseudo-] Philo, *De Sampsone* 25, ed. F. Siegert, o.c., 67.

183 Burchard, *Joseph and Aseneth*, 704.

184 J.55:3-5.

## V

### 30. *The reaction of Jacob*

1. The reaction of Jacob has been recorded in TL 6:6:

καὶ ἤκουσεν ὁ πατήρ — and father heard <of it>
καὶ ὠργίσθη καὶ ἐλυπήθη... — and became angry and grieved...

This is an echo of Gen.34:7, where it is said that the sons of Jacob came back from the field; when they heard of it (כשמעם), the men were grieved (ויתעצבו) and they became very angry (ויחר להם מאד). However, this grief and anger were caused by the defilement of Dinah, but here, in the case of Jacob, it is anger and grief about the fact that they had taken revenge for that incident[185]. In the biblical text Jacob's reaction (Gen.34:30f.) betrays indignation caused by fear, but his words are merely introduced by, 'and he said'. The retelling in Jubilees (30:25) explicitly says that 'he reproached them'[186]. Josephus also speaks of Jacob's emotions, Ἰακώβῳ δὲ ἐκπλαγέντι...καὶ χαλεπαίνοντι πρὸς τοὺς υἱούς, 'Jacob being aghast ... and indignant at his sons'[187]. The combination of anger and grief which we find in TL is not unusual in Greek texts[188].

2. Jacob's curse of the anger of Simeon and Levi (Gen.49:7) is mentioned in Midrash Rabbah on this verse, but in its comments on Gen.48:22, *i.e.* the words of Jacob, 'moreover I have given to thee one Shechem which I took out of the hand of the Amorites *with my sword and my bow*', the exegesis of R. Nechemya is presented: he applies this verse to the Shechem episode. 'Our father Jacob had not desired his sons to perpetrate that deed <of vengeance>, yet when they did perpetrate it, he exclaimed, 'Shall I leave my sons to fall into the hands of the heathens!' What did he do? He took his sword and bow', etc.[189] Although it is not said that Jacob was active in the attack, it is clear that this comment implies not only anger, but also loyalty.

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185 Charles, 370 note ad 3a, observes 'Yet Levi says "we sinned" in vi.7' this is a wrong contrast.

186 Charles, *Jubilees*, 184.

187 Josephus, *Antiquitates*, I, 341 (xxi:2), ed. Thackeray, o.c., 162:26f.

188 Cf. J. Smit Sibinga, Toorn en droefheid in Marcus 3:5, in *De Geest in het geding*, Festschrift J. A. Oosterbaan, Alphen aan de Rijn 1978, 255-267, who collected about forty instances of this kind, including TL VI:6.

189 Tr. Freedman, *Genesis Rabbah Genesis* II, 943f.

31. *The reason for Jacob's reaction*

1. The reason for Jacob's anger and sadness has been described in the following way (6:6b):

ὅτι κατεδέξαντο τὴν περιτομὴν, καὶ μετὰ τοῦτο ἀπέθανον,

'because they had received circumcision, and after that they had been slain'[190]. The indignation is understandable: the circumcision made them proselytes (cf. Exod.13:43ff.), so they were kind of Israelites now, and could not have been punished any more in this way. This is different from the biblical narrative, in which Jacob is annoyed by the fact that his sons Simeon and Levi had brought trouble on him by making him odious to the inhabitants of the country; he now fears a dangerous reaction of these peoples: they might destroy his small family (Gen.34:30, cf. Jub.30:25f.; cf. Pirqe de Rabbi Eliezer 38). Even Josephus, who actually did not make mention of the circumcision, tells us that Jacob was shocked 'at the enormity of what had happened' (πρὸς τὸ μέγεθος τῶν γεγονότων), and implicitly tells us about the fear of Jacob, when he continues saying that God stood beside Jacob and exhorted him to take courage (ὁ θεὸς παραστὰς ἐκέλευσε θαρρεῖν)[191].

2. The moral side of Jacob's anger is also found in the curse of Gen.49:6f., 'cursed be their anger, for it is fierce, their wrath, for it is extreme'. The Targums Jerusalem and Neofiti I repeat this, but they add to it an interesting feature: Jacob blames them of not having taken into consideration his honour (לא חסו על איקרי)[192]. Is this a view similar to the one that we found in TL?

32. *The consequence of Jacob's anger and grief*

1. Jacob's anger and grief result into a punishment of the two sons (6:6c):

καὶ ἐν ταῖς εὐλογίαις ἄλλως ἐποίησεν,

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[190] Kee's rendering 'and die' (Hollander-De Jonge: 'had died') is too weak. Cf. 'had been put to death' (so Charles, De Jonge), which renders ἀποθνήσκω adequately, cf. *LS*, *s.v.* II.

[191] Josephus, *Antiquitates* I, 341 (xxi:2), ed. Thackeray, *o.c.*, 162:26ff.

[192] Ginsburger, *Pseudo-Jonathan*, 92; Díez Macho, *Neofiti I*, 329.

'and in his blessings he made a change'[193], lit. he made it differently, apparently otherwise than he had planned from the outset."Αλλως ποιεῖν is clear in its meaning, but difficult to render: 'did inequitably' (Charles), "machte er es anders' (Schnapp), 'did otherwise' (Hollander-De Jonge), or paraphrasing, 'he made an exception of us among our brothers' (De Jonge). The blessings refer to the Gen.49, 1-28 (cf. TS 5:6). This passage ends with the remark that Jacob εὐλόγησεν αὐτούς, ἕκαστον κατὰ τὴν εὐλογίαν αὐτοῦ εὐλόγησεν αὐτούς (LXX, vs.28)., neglecting the fact that there is mention of a curse in the case of Simeon and Levi: 'cursed (ארור, ἐπικατάρατος) be their anger' (vs.7)[194].

2. In the text of Charles we find the following reading: παρεῖδεν ἡμῖν, 'looked amiss upon us' (Charles), 'übersah er uns' (Riessler, Becker), 'he passed us by' (Kee), in agreement with Mss. *c-h-i-j*. This phrase is apparently an explanatory variant of the more difficult text of the other manuscripts[195].

33. *The sin of Levi and Simeon*

As a matter of fact, Levi acknowledges that something was wrong in their action (6:7a):

ἡμάρτομεν γάρ, ὅτι παρὰ γνώμην αὐτοῦ τοῦτο πεποιήκαμεν,

'For we sinned in that we had done this against his will'[196]. The narrator makes Levi emphasize the fact that Jacob had been honest in the whole affair. He did not plan the circumcision as a stratagem to destroy the Sichemites. The raid at Shechem after the circumcision was something that would never have met with his approval. The reader knows also that Levi is also excused, since he not only had performed a divine order, but—if my view is correct (§§ 20.2, 22)— had also advised his father and brother that they should *not* require circumcision. God's vengeance was carried out

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[193] J.31:9, supported by the Armenian, cf. Stone, *Testament*, 141.

[194] The Targums TJ and TNeof. change the text, so that the Shechem is cursed.

[195] Cf. Schnapp's comment on his rendering 'machte es anders': 'Der Sinn ist: Er berücksichtigte uns nicht bei seinem Segen...was auch eine Hdschr ... liest'.

[196] Ch.40:6f.: Διότι ἡμάρτομεν, ἐπειδή κτλ. with *c-h-i-j*. Ms.*l* has only ὅτι ἡμάρτομεν παρὰ γνώμην αὐτοῦ.

by them, but their father, who represents human morals here, condemned the attack. Therefore, the change in the blessing was understandable. The same idea is formulated by Josephus, πράξαντες δὲ ταῦτα δίχα τῆς τοῦ πατρὸς γνώμης[197].

34. *The illness*

1. At this point there is a puzzling observation (6:7b):
καίγε ἐμαλακίσθη ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ.

The first question is, what day Levi refers to. If we take it as referring to the day of the assault, one might interpret the phrase in the following ways:

a) 'and he *was* sick on that day'[198]. If this is the meaning, then we have here an excuse for Levi and Simeon. It is true that the raid was undertaken contrary to their father's intention. But they did not have the opportunity to consult him before they began with it, because he was in bad health that specific day[199]. One might read it then as a parenthesis.

b) 'and he *became* sick on that day'[200]. This would mean that Jacob became sick, when he heard about the atrocities against the circumcised people of Shechem and the massacre, sick because he resented this very much.

If we connect 'that very day' with the day that Jacob gave his blessings, Gen.49:1-28, then it may be interpreted as a parenthesis '—and he had become sick on that day—', referring to Gen.48:21, 'and Israel said to Joseph: Look, I am going to die', and 49:1, 'and Jacob called his sons...'. The illness explains why he gave his blessings to his sons at that time, or—as an excuse mentioned by Levi— being ill while giving his blessings may have been one of the causes that he changed the blessings of Simeon and Levi, which was partly due to his bad state[201].

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197 Josephus, *Antiquitates*, I, 341(xxi:1), ed. Thackeray, *o.c.*, 162:24f.

198 So e.g. Charles (308), Hollander-De Jonge (146), De Jonge (529).

199 De Jonge, Notes, in *Studies*, 260, n.47, gives a variation of this under (a) 'the last sentence in vs.7 explains why Jacob did not interfere when his sons attacked Shechem', cf. Hollander-De Jonge, *Testaments*, 148.

200 So e.g. Kee (790).

201 Becker, *Testaments*, 51: 'Falls cb ursprünglich sind, müsste 6,7b Glosse sein oder Abbreviatur für einen langeren Textzusammenhang, der nicht

2. However, there is another reading in manuscripts (*l d m e a f h -i -j*)[202]:

καίγε ἐμαλακίσθην ἐν τῇ ἡμέρᾳ ἐκείνῃ,

'and I became sick on that very day'. Levi was aware of a connection between his sin and some illness that betook him on the day of the raid (cf. TR 1:8, ἔπραξα τὸ πονηρόν...καὶ ἐμαλακίσθην ἕως θανάτου). Or if the day of the blessings is meant, the illness of Levi was caused by the change of the blessing of Simeon and himself, since he felt responsible or because he felt this to be unjustified. It is obvious that one cannot decide with certainty which text is original or what the meaning of either variant reading is. My preference is the reading of *b* and *c* , which often disagree, but confirm each other here[203].

## VI

### 35. *Levi's reaction*

1. Levi defends himself before his children by referring to the fact that he had seen, in the vision, that his action was in conformity with the will of God, 6:8-10, and that in what he did God's anger had fallen upon the Sichemites, 5:11. What may surprise us is the fact that he apparently did not speak to his father about the heavenly vision, when he defended himself. His defence begins in the following way, 7:1:

καὶ εἶπεν τῷ πατρί· μὴ ὀργίζου, κύριε...,

'and I said to <my> father: "Be not angry, <my> Lord"...'[204]. This introduction reacts to what was said earlier, namely that Jacob had become angry (6:6, ὠργίσθη), but there seems to be in it also a hint on what has been said about the ὀργὴ θεοῦ (6:11). This seems to me to be an argument in favour of the text including μὴ ὀργίζου (contra Charles, cf. §§ 58.41).

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mehr bekannt ist'. My suggestions as to the meaning of the text may demonstrate that this view is unnecessary.

202 Contra *b* and *c*, cf. ἐμαλακισθ' of *g*. This is the reading rendered by Schnapp, Riessler, Becker.

203 Cf. M.de Jonge (Ed.), *Testaments*, 183 with preference for type I.

204 Charles omits the words 'be not angry, Lord' with *c-h-i-j*; the other Mss. have it, partly with μου *a m*, partly with Ἰακώβ *g a f*; *e* adds both words here; Ch.41:5-7 is followed by Charles and Kee.

2. Then Levi continues by giving the reason for this reaction. Jacob should understand that the Shechem massacre formed part of God's history of salvation of Israel:

ὅτι ἐν σοὶ ἐξουδενώσει κύριος τοὺς Χαναναίους,

'for through you[205] the Lord will annihilate the Canaanites'. The verb ἐξουδενόω = ἐξουθενόω 16:2; TA 7:2, TB 9:3, usually means 'to contempt, despise, treat with contempt' (so Schnapp, Becker); cf. Jub.30:4 (Lat.)[206]. This verb is in the LXX an equivalent of Hebrew בוז, בזה, 'despise', מאס, 'reject, despise', but also of בוס, 'tread, trample down'. There is, however, another interpretation, 'bring to nothing' (Kee), 'set at naught' (Hollander-De Jonge), 'destroy' (De Jonge, Charles), 'annihilate', which seems to me preferable to the rendering 'despoil' (Charles, Riessler)[207]. The annihilation of the Canaanites enables the fulfilling of the promises of God:

καὶ δώσει τὴν γῆν αὐτῶν σοι καὶ τῷ σπέρματί σου μετά σου

'and He will give their land to you and to your seed after you'. This formula reminds us of the promises given to Abraham (Gen.12:17; 13:15; 15:18; 17:8; 24:7), Isaac (26:3f.) *and Jacob* (28:4; 35:12). The promises to the Patriarchs can only be realized, if the Canaanites, including the Hevites, are thrown out of the country (Exod.33:1f.; Deut.4:37ff.).

3. The reference to God's promises in order to justify the massacre reminds us of the heavenly oracle which—in the description of Theodotus[208]—Simeon brought forward to persuade Levi. The line in the poem, βλάπτε[209] θεὸς Σικίμων οἰκήτορας, is introduced as a divine word: Εὖ γὰρ ἐγὼ μῦθόν <γε> πεπυσμένος εἰμὶ θεοῖο· | δώσειν γάρ ποτ' ἔφησε δεκ' ἔθνεα παισὶν Ἀβραάμ, 'I have clearly heard a word of God: He said that once He would give ten peoples to the children of Abraham', which in the

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205 Riessler (1163), 'durch mich' (*sic*).

206 Cf. Becker, *Testamente*, 51, n.4b.

207 Charles, Testaments, 308 introduces this meaning, but in his edition (41app.) he defends the meaning 'destroy'; he assumes that the original text read יבוס or יבוז. check

208 Theodotus, in Eusebius, *Praep.Evang.* IX,22.9, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 515, resp. 17 and 13f.

209 Collins, The Epic, 95 takes the verb as an imperative, an appeal to God to destry the Sichemites, but this is impossible if it is to be taken as a divine oracle; it is an epic imperfect, cf. Pummer, Genesis 34, 183, n.17.

paraphrase of Alexander Polyhistor is seen as an oracle (λόγιον) that said that God had decided to give these peoples to the descendants of the patriarch, which Simeon could produce[210].

36. *Shechem, the city of fools*

1. Levi continues by saying that their action has shown the foolishness of the city (7:2a):

ἔσται γὰρ ἀπὸ σήμερον Σικίμα λεγομένη πόλις ἀσυνέτων,

'for from this day forward Shechem shall be called City of Imbeciles'. In fact, they were already fools, so that the action in itself was a reaction to their foolishness (2b):

ὅτι ὡσεί τις χλευάσαι μωρόν, 'for just as someone mocks at a fool,

οὕτως ἐχλευάσαμεν αὐτούς... so did we mock at them ...'[211]

There are many textual variations in this verse[212]. Ms. *b* may have preserved the original reading with the optative mood, χλευάσαι. The marginal reading of *h*, ἴσως· ὅτι ὡς ἐχλεύασαν ἡμᾶς, οὕτως ἐχλευάσαμεν αὐτούς, is an interesting conjecture, which sees in the crime against Dinah a mockery against Jacob's family, but it fails the interesting comparison that has been made in the text of *b*. The successful action of Levi and Simeon makes it once and for all clear that the Sichemites were fools. This foolishness was clear already in the seduction of Dinah (3):

ὅτι καίγε ἀφροσύνην ἔπραξαν ἐν Ισραήλ, μιᾶναι τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν,

'since, indeed, they committed a folly in Israel, by defiling our sister'[213]. This is a reminiscence of Gen.34:7, 'for he accomplished

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210 Eusebius, *o.c.*, IX,22.8, ed.Mras, *o.c.*, 515:10f.; ἀναίρεω means 'to ordain, proclaim an oracle' and has λόγιον as object; Riessler (1265) renders it as 'to kill': 'indem er einen Spruch vorbrachte, wonach Gott den Nachkommen Abrahams zehn Heidenvölker zur Vernichtung übergäbe'.

211 Cf. Jub.30:4 (see § 5).

212 J.32:9; Ch. 40:8f. (χλευάσει with *c a f g l e i*); the word μωρόν is wrongly written as -μερον after the verbal ending -σαι or -σει: σήμερον *l*, σεἰμερον *h-j* (-σει μερον *i*).

213 J.32:10f.; Ch.42:1f., who reads μιάναντες of *c-h-i-j g l d m e a f* which may have preserved here the original text. See for the difficulty to establish the reading, De Jonge, *Testaments* (1978), 183; Hollander-De Jonge, *Testaments*, 147, prefer the reading μιᾶναι (μιάναντες 'gives a smoother text').

folly (נבלה) by laying with Jacob's daughter', and in its translation with ἀφροσύνη independent from the LXX (ἄσχημον ἐποίησεν). The idea of folly is also expressed in Philo's comment[214], which says that Shechem had practised folly (ἀφροσύνην), when he tried to corrupt and defile the judgment faculties of understanding, that is: Dinah.

2. There is an interesting parallel in Sirach 50:25f.[215]:

(a) ἐν δυσὶν ἔθνεσιν προσώχθισεν ἡ ψυχή μου,
(b) καὶ τὸ τρίτον οὐκ ἔστιν ἔθνος·
(c) οἱ καθήμενοι ἐν ὄρει Σαμαρείας καὶ Φυλιστιίμ,
(d) καὶ ὁ λαὸς ὁ μωρὸς ὁ κατοικῶν ἐν Σικίμοις.

The text of the Septuagint may surprise us in that it refers both to Samaria and Shechem, as if it deals with two nations. Apparently, the disgust of the translator against the Samaritans was so vehement that he changed Hebrew שעיר into Samaria[216]. Originally, the Edomites were meant. We have here an echo of Deut.32:21. When Sirach speaks of Shechem as a non-nation (cf. Hebrew: איננו עם ) and of a foolish people (גוי נבל), he uses the designations with which God once had confronted Israel: the stubborn people of Israel would become jealous through a non-nation (לא עם, οὐκ ἔθνει) and an imbecile people (גוי נבל, ἔθνει ἀσυνέτῳ)[217]. Although in Deuteronomium the Babylonians are meant, one cannot deny the possibility that Sirach has alluded to its wording and applied it to the people of the Samaritan Shechem[218]. Is it possible that the author of the Testament of Levi alludes here to the Sirach text?[219]

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214 Philo, *Migr.Abr.* 224, ed. Colson-Whitaker, *Philo* IV, 264:5-9; cf. *Mut. Nom.* 197, V, 242:25.

215 J. Ziegler, *Sapientia Jesu Filii Sirach* (Septuaginta XII:2), Göttingen 1965, 361; cf. P. C. Beentjes, *Jesus Sirach en Tenach*, Nieuwegein 1981, 169-171, for its setting. Cf. also J. D. Purvis, Ben Sira and the foolish People of Shechem, *JNES* 24 (1965) 88-94, for an attempt to find a historical setting of the two verses. Cf. also Haupt, *Testament*, 26.

216 For Seir, cf. H. L. Strack, *Die Sprüche Jesu', des Sohnes Sirachs*, Leipzig 1903, 54, cf. the reading of the text of Symmachus: ἐν Σηίρ, and Latin: *in monte Seir.*

217 ἀσύνετος and μωρός are synonyms and render נבל here, שכל or סכל elsewhere.

218 Beentjes, *Jesus Sirach*, 171, denies any relationship due to the different contexts, but intertextuality does not require similar contexts.

219 M. de Jonge, Notes, in: *Studies*, 260, 'vii.2a alludes to Sir.l.26'.

Or was it an existing typology of the Samaritans among the Jews, based on Deut.32:21, that has been used both in Sirach and TL?

3. There may have been also a pun on the name Hemor in these texts, since Ἐμμώρ lends itself to an identification with μωρός, חמור to an identification with חמור, 'ass'. One may compare here the exegesis of Philo: Shechem, being the son of Hemor, was practising folly, for Hemor means ass (καλεῖται γὰρ Ἐμὼρ ὄνος). Shechem is contrasted, therefore, with Simeon and Levi who are the representatives of φρόνησις. He is a son of ἀνοία, since his father's name is translated with 'ass'[220]. Those who tried to seduce Dinah are ἄφρονες[221].

*37. The result of the action—Dinah home again*

1. The returning of Dinah from Shechem has been omitted in many manuscripts of TL. That is the reason why Charles read as text merely the words (7:4):

> ἀπάραντες δὲ ἤλθομεν εἰς Βεθήλ, 'and we departed and came to Bethel'[222].

This departure to Bethel is referring to the biblical narrative, Gen.35:6, cf. Jub.31:2. One should expect, however, that mention was made of the rescue of Dinah. As a matter of fact, in the recent edition such a reference is found in the text[223]:

> (a) καὶ λαβόντες ἐκεῖθεν τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἡμῶν
> (b) ἀπάραντες ἤλθομεν εἰς Βεθήλ.

'We took our sister from there, departed and came to Bethel'. This must have been the original wording, whereas the text of Charles was caused by parablepsis (ἡμῶν[3b *in fine*]...ἡμῶν[4a *in fine*]). One cannot miss any mentioning of the return of Dinah for whom the battle was fought. What may surprise us is that the whole family is involved in bringing Dinah back home, for one should have

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220 Philo, *Migr.Abr.* 224, 223, ed. Colson-Whitaker, *Philo* IV, 264:4-7; 264:1-4; 264:9ff.

221 Philo, *Mut.Nom.*193, ed. Colson-Whitaker, *Philo* V, 240:16f., 20, cf. *ibid.*, 195, *Philo* V, 242:9f.

222 Ch.42:2f.(cf. *c-h-j l d m a f*). He is followed in the translations of Charles (308), Riessler (1163), Kee (790), Becker (52).

223 J.32:11f.(=*b*); so Schnapp. The longer text is also found in the manuscripts *e* (+ Δίναν, *v.l.* ἐπάραντες) en *g* (- ἐκεῖθεν; - ἀπάραντες)

expected that Levi would have done this in view of the way he figures in TL. Now, the author partly followed the wording of the biblical narrative, Gen.34:26; 35:5f., but deviates from it in certain respects.

2. The wording of TL 7:4 reminds us of the LXX: (34:26) καὶ ἔλαβον τὴν Δίναν ἐκ τοῦ οἴκου τοῦ Συχὲμ καὶ ἐξῆλθον (35:5) καὶ ἐξῆρεν Ἰσραὴλ ἐκ Σικιμῶν (6) ἦλθεν δὲ Ἰακὼβ εἰς Λούζα...ἥ ἐστιν Βαιθήλ. In spite of this agreement, there is a difference in order. In Genesis, Simeon and Levi bring Dinah back home, before the other brothers came and despoiled the city. In TL the return of Dinah is postponed until a later stage of the story. One might receive the same impression from the narrative in Jubilees: 30:4, the extirpation of the city is told long before the return of Dinah (30:24a); however, even here the tale of Dinah's home-coming is found before the raid of the other brothers (24b), in agreement with the biblical text. The texts of Josephus (ἐπανάγουσι τὴν ἀδελφήν) and Pseudo-Philo (*et Dinam sororem suam acceperunt et exierunt inde*) do not give us a decisive clue, since they do not report the robbery by the other brothers, but it is probable that they followed the biblical order of the story[224].

3. There is one author who sides with TL 7:4, Theodotus: he amply describes the way in which Simeon and Levi killed Hemor and Shechem[225], then he relates—according to the paraphrase of Alexander Polyhistor—that, 'when the other brothers heard about their action, they came to their assistance, and pillaged the city, rescued their sister—καὶ τὴν ἀδελφὴν ἀναρπυσαμένους—and brought her back together with the captives to her father's farm'[226].

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[224] Josephus, *Antiquitates*, I,340 (xxi:1), ed. Thackeray, *o.c.*, 162:15; Pseudo-Philo, *Lib.Ant.Bibl.*8:7, ed. Kisch, *o.c.*, 134:7f. Josephus attributes the killing of all men to Levi and Simeon, expressly stating that they spared the women; the biblical account relates that the women were taken captive by the other brothers.

[225] Theodotus, in Eusebius, *Praep.Evang.* IX,22.10f., ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 515:21ff., 516:1-7.

[226] Theodotus, in Eusebius, *o.c.* IX,22.12, ed. Mras, *o.c.*, 516:9f.

## VII

38. *The Wrath of the Lord has come upon them...*

1. The similarity between 1 Thess. 2:16c and TL 6:11 was the occasion for my comments upon the whole Shechem episode in the Testament of Levi. So we cannot finish our study before having given attention to the problems which have been caused by the obvious relation between these two verses. However, before we can discuss the relationship, we have to examine first the form of the text in the Testament. This is necessary, because there are in the two editions that we have taken notice of in this study remarkable differences:

| De Jonge | | Charles |
|---|---|---|
| ἔφθασε δὲ | 1 | ἔφθασε δὲ |
| | 2 | αὐτούς |
| ἡ ὀργὴ κυρίου | 3 | ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ |
| ἐπ' αὐτοὺς | 4 | |
| εἰς τέλος | 5 | εἰς τέλος |

Charles's text is followed by Kee ('but the wrath of God ultimately came upon them') and Becker ('Jedoch der Zorn Gottes kam ganz und gar über sie'). Charles himself, however, renders, 'but the wrath of the Lord came upon them to the uttermost'[227]. His uncertainty about his own text was already clear from his introduction to the text, since he assumed that ἐπ' was probably omitted in the α-recension through a simple scribal error. The text of the so-called β-recension was followed by Sinker, Schnapp, Riessler[228].

2. The constant elements in all manuscripts are lines 1 (except for *d*, διὰ τοῦτο ἔφθασε) and 5. As to order and form there are the following discrepancies in lines 2-4:

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227 Charles, Testaments, 308; cf. Ch.xliv, where he follows the other text, but maintains 'of God'.

228 R. Sinker, The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, in A. C. Coxe (ed.), *Ante-Nicene Library* VIII (repr. Grand Rapids 1975), 14; Schnapp, Testamente, 467; Riessler, *Schrifttum*, 1163.

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | ἡ ὀργὴ κυρίου | ἐπ' αὐτούς | *b l* |
| ἐπ' αὐτοὺς | ἡ ὀργὴ κυρίου | | *d g m* |
| αὐτοὺς | ἡ ὀργὴ κυρίου | | *a f e* |
| αὐτοὺς | ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ | | *c* |

There is a difficulty with *h-i-j*, which usually share the reading of *c*, and form a separate recension with it. From the apparatus of Charles one might conclude that *h-i* agree with *c*, except for the omission of αὐτούς[229]. De Jonge's apparatus *seems* to suggest that *h-i-j* differ from *c* in reading ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς[230].

3. It is most likely that the original text contained the words 'the wrath *of the Lord*', attested in both families: the alternatives are not *b-l* and *c*, but *b-l* and *d g m* (*a f e*)[231]. The pun in 7:1, μὴ ὀργίζου, κύριε, although absent from *c-h-i-j*, may be an argument in favour of the reading in *b l d g m a f e*. There is reason to assume that the reading with the preposition ἐπί, present in both families (*b l d g m*) and in the Armenian (*y veray*), was original. More difficult is the decision, where actually the words ἐπ' αὐτούς were found[232]. The reading without the preposition, whether the result of careless scribes or not, suggest that one understood φθάνω (c. acc.) to mean 'anticipate'[233]. However, the preceding verdicts on the Sichemites tell us that the divine wrath was the result of their own practices, so that the reading 'came *upon* them' is to be prefered to a translation like 'the wrath of the Lord..has forestalled them completely'[234], in which the verb becomes almost a synonym of 'hinder' (cf. ἐκώλυσεν in TL 6:8c). The wrath of the Lord[235] came

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229 Ch.32 app.: α (save that *h* omits αὐτούς), cf. Ch.296 App.VI; if this is correct, its text would read 'but the wrath of God reached the end'.

230 J.32 app.—the apparatus is not clear here, for one might conclude from it that *h-i-j* do not present the inversion which *c* and other Mss. have, since they are mentioned separately without the inversion sign, whereas Charles attests that these Mss. have the order of the α-recension and its omission of ἐπί, and even the omission of αὐτούς in *h*.

231 Cf. M. de Jonge, *Testaments* (1978), 183 (181, xxxv); cf. H. J. de Jonge, Earliest stage, 64; for the agreements between *b* and *l*, cf H. J. de Jonge, Textüberlieferung, 58f.

232 Cf. M. de Jonge, *Testaments* (1978), 183.

233 Cf. G. Fitzer, φθάνω κτλ., *TWNT* IX, Stuttgart 1973, 90-94, for our passage, 92.

234 J. E. Frame, *Epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians*, Edinburgh (1912) ³1960, 115.

235 These words are absent from the Armenian β-recension, Stone, *Testament*, 76:7f. Stone observes that the Armenian text does not make sense as it

upon them[236] through the action of Simeon and Levi, which was the answer to their wickedness.

4. The words εἰς τέλος are difficult to render, since it may mean 'to the uttermost' (Sinker, Charles), 'ganz und gar' (Becker), 'at last' (De Jonge), 'ultimately' (Kee), 'definitely' (Hollander-De Jonge), 'zur Vernichtung' (Schnapp, Riessler). One has to choose between the modal aspect or the temporal aspect[237]. One has to consider a Semitic background for the expression such as לנצח or לכלה. Anyhow, it seems to express at least a radical and definitive answer of God in reaction to the impiety of the Sichemites, but it does not exclude the idea of time. One might suggest a rendering like 'finally'.

### 39. *1 Thess.2:16c and TL 6:11- A first inquiry*

1. The resemblance between the two texts is striking, especially if one compares the 'western text' ( D E F G *876* it Vulg Ambst) of Paul's pronouncement:

ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ θεοῦ εἰς τέλος.

This form of the saying agrees with Mss. *g d m* of TL 6:11 in reading 'on them' before 'the wrath', with *c*(*-h-i-j*) in the addition of 'of God' after "the wrath'. On the other hand, if one follows the reading of B *1739* and Origen, there is an agreement with *b l* in the inversion of 'on them' and 'the wrath', without any addition. The perfect ἔφθακεν (cf. B Ψ D*) is not found in any manuscript of TL.

2. In spite of some differences, the agreement is impressive. Vorstman concluded already that this could not be a coincidence[238]. In his view, there were the following possible explanations:

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stands; Ms. B adds *noyn*, '*idem*', to fill up the lacuna; J. Issarverdens, *The Uncanonical Writings of the Old Testament*, Venice ²1934, 286, fills the lacuna with 'the wrath of the Lord'.

236 So Hollander-De Jonge, *Testaments*, 146, rather than 'overtook them' (De Jonge) which might suggest a text without the preposition.

237 Cf. T. Baarda, Maar de toorn is over hen gekomen, 55f. (VI:5, '...tot het einde'), esp. notes 279-292.

238 J. M. Vorstman, *Disquisitio de Testamentorum XII Patriarchaum origine et pretio (...)*, Diss. Leiden 23d of June 1857, Rotterdam 1857, 22-26, 22f.: 'Occurrit scilicet in fine capitis VI Testamenti *Levi* sententia, quae totidem fere verbis apud *Paulum* etiam legitur', 23... 'tanta autem haec videtur, ut fortuita dici nequeat'.

1. Paul borowed his phrase from TL.
2. The author of TL borrowed the sentence from Paul.

However, one should consider other possibilities in this case:

3. The phrase in Paul was a secondary addition by an interpolator.
4. The text in TL was added by an interpolator who borrowed it from Paul.

Moreover, one should not exclude a fifth possibility:

5. Paul and the author of TL were independently depending on a common source.

40. *Is the pronouncement of Paul an interpolation?*

The conjecture that the sentence in 1 Thess. 2:16c was an interpolation has already been made by A. Ritschl in a review of F. C. Baur's boek on Paul, in 1847. This guess has been welcomed by several later scholars such as J. Moffatt (1901), R. Knopf (1905), F. S. Marsh (1918), J. A. Parkes (1934) and J. W. Bailey (1955)[239]. One cannot discard this guess as easy as Vorstman does ('quo jure hoc fieri possit, non video'), but he is correct that the wording of the phrase is not foreign to Paul and that it fits well into the context[240]. I have shown elsewhere that it is not justified to accept the conjecture of Ritschl. The fact that later on other theories were developed to argue that 2:15-16, 2:14-16 or even 2:13-16 were interpolated in Paul's text, partly on the ground that one could not detach 2:16c from its context, may tell us that 16c could not be isolated so easily from the pericope of which it forms the conclusion. Since I share the view that the whole pericope to which 16c belongs is genuinely Pauline, I cannot accept that it was interpolated by a later author, and that it was borrowed from the Testament of Levi at a later stage[241].

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239 Cf. Baarda, 'Maar de toorn is over hen gekomen...', 23 (§ III:2), cf. 62, n.47; *idem*, 1 Thess.2:14-16, Rodrigues in 'Nestle-Aland', *NThT* 39 (1985) 186-193, esp.186f., 192; for Marsh, cf. 'Thessalonians (Epistles to the)', in: Hastings, *Dictionary of the Apostolic Church*, II, Edinburgh 1918, 569-574, 573a ('a reminiscence of Test.Levi, vi.11'). Moffat mentions as adherents of this conjecture also F. Spitta, O. Pfleiderer and J. Drummond.

240 Vorstman, *Disquisitio*, resp. 23 and 24f.

241 See for my arguments the discussion in 'Maar de toorn is over hen gekomen...', 28-30 (III:6), and for the respective theories of interpolation, *ibid.*, 23-28 (III:32-5).

41. *Is the pronouncement in TL an interpolation?*

1. Much more difficult is the question, whether TL 6:11 is one of the (Christian) interpolations in the Testament of Levi. The question of interpolations is beset with many difficulties and complications which I cannot deal with here. Let me put forward my working hypothesis. I follow the view of those scholars who find in the present Greek text of the Testaments an early Christian document. Further, I take it that its author was a hellenistic Jewish-Christian author[242]. My assumption is that this author knew Aramaic, c.q. Hebrew, and that he had access to Semitic sources that dealt with Levi. One cannot, as a matter of fact, absolutely deny the possibility that the text in the course of its tradition suffered interpolations, but since my thesis is that the author was a Jew converted to Christianity there is no reason to suppose that all 'Christian' elements are suspect. The author as a redactor of this Greek text could have remodeled earlier Semitic or Greek Levi traditions in such a way that he departed from his sources where he thought this necessary. However, be this as it may, the saying in question is not a specific Christian pronouncement, except for the fact that we have a similar utterance in Paul's text. But even there it has a distinct Jewish character[243].

2. From this point of view one might consider the possibility that 6:11 was part of the design of the very author of TL. Chapter 6 presents us with the following line of thought: Levi has told his children that the angelic command to take revenge is confirmed through the finding of a shield. He and Simeon killed Shechem and Hemor, afterwards the brothers slew the citizens. In spite of the fact that his father did resent the killing of the circumcized, it all had happened according to the order in the vision. For, although Levi took the initiative, it was not just his choice, for it was God himself who had ordained that this should happen. Levi had seen in the vision that *God's sentence was unto evil upon Shechem*

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242 Cf. T. Baarda, De namen van de kinderen van Levi, De duiding van de namen Gersjôn, Qehath, Merari en Jochebed in het Testament van Levi 11, *Amsterdamse Cahiers voor Exegese en Theologie* 8 (1987) 87-107; idem, Qehath -What's in a Name? Concerning the Interpretation of the Name "Qehath" in the Testament of Levi 11:4-6, *JSJ* 19 (1987) 215-229.

243 Cf. 'Maar de toorn is over hen gekomen...', 47-56.

and its inhabitants. They had shown the usual Canaanite misbehaviour towards foreigners that Levi's family had suffered since the days of Abraham, but *the wrath of the Lord has (now) come upon them.* So it is not Levi's fault that the city had been attacked, but it is part of the salvation history for Israel. This is the explanation given in the next chapter (7:1f.): 'Be not *angry*, my *lord*, for it is through you that the Lord will annihilate the Canaanites'. This reaction of Levi is playing with the wording of 6:11. The Lord is angry (ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ κυρίου) with the Sichemites for good reasons, therefore Jacob (κύριε) should not be angry (μὴ ὀργίζου) with Levi, who as a medium of God's *anger* is merely executing God's *sentence.* If 7:1 is, in this form, part of the text of the Greek author, then it is most likely that his text contained 6:11 as well. This implies that this verse is not an interpolation.

3. One of the scholars[244] that considered the possibility of an interpolation was B. Rigaux ('il peut s'être glissé des interpolations'). He finds in the Armenian rendering of the α-recension, which omits vs.11, 'le plus fort argument contre la priorité de Lévi'[245]. This implies that in his view the Armenian demonstrates, in spite of the testimony of all Greek manuscripts, that the text did not figure in the original Greek text, but has crept into it at a later stage as an interpolation. However, apart from the fact that the Armenian β-recension, which *has* the phrase in a somewhat mutilated form ('and <it/*idem*> will come upon them to the end'[246]), is now be held to be the oldest and usually better representative of the Armenian text[247], there is the fact that the α-recension does not only omit vs.11, but also some words of vs.10. Since these latter words in 6:10 begin with καί (Arm. *ew*) and 7:1 also begin with καί (resp. *ew*), one might assume a parablepsis

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244 Cf. F. C. Burkitt, Dr. Charles's Edition of the "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs", *JTS* 10 (1909) 135-141, 138, 'Why should we not regard this clause also as a Christian addition, or at any rate as having been modified in language by the translator, or by an editor who was familiar with 1 Thess.ii 16'.

245 B. Rigaux, *Saint Paul, Les épîtres aux Thessaloniciens*, Paris-Gembloux 1956, 112f.; 455f.

246 Stone, *Testament*, 76 (cf. nota); *noyn* added in B*; for the α-text *ibid.*, 140.

247 Stone, *Testament*, 27f.; M. de Jonge, The Greek Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and the Armenian version, in: *Studies*, 120-139.

fault in Armenian tradition or perhaps, but less likely an error by the translator responsible for this recension. The Armenian text is, therefore, not at all a strong argument in settling the question.

42. *The author of TL dependent on Paul*

1. The theory that TL drew this verse from Paul is put forward by several scholars since the last century. In 1857 Vorstman defended this view with due modesty ('In re tam incerta me non audacius loqui nemo sane improbabit'). He postulates the thesis that the author of the Testaments may have read Paul ('legisse videtur'). Then he observes that this is the only text in which the author borrowed a text from the apostle[248], and since the Epistle to the Thessalonians is the oldest letter that we have of Paul, one might conclude that the author of the Testaments wrote in a period in which the Pauline letters had not yet been spread around in the churches. This means that this author may have composed his work in the late first century or slightly later. It has been suggested by Bammel that H. Ewald was the first scholar to defend this thesis. This is not correct. Bammel[249] found a hand-written notice in this author's own copy of his commentary on the Thessalonian Epistles (which is in the possession of the University library at Göttingen). Now this commentary was published in the same year as the dissertation of Vorstman, so the hand-written notice may date from a later date than 1857; one might consider the possibility that Ewald had read the thesis of Vorstman and made his notice on the basis of Vorstman's proposition. Anyhow, the thesis that TL 6 'ends with a quotation from 1 Thess.II:16' has been defended by later authors such as Sinker[250], M. de Jonge[251] and B. Rigaux[252]. The underlying idea of this

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248 Charles, Testaments, 292, who had a different position with respect to the dependence question, observes that 'the Pauline borrowings are too numerous to be dealt with here' and mentions besides our text Rom.1:32; 12:21; 1 Cor. 4:4, 7:5 and 2 Cor.7:10 as examples.

249 E. Bammel, Judenverfolgung und Naherwartung, *ZThK* 56 (1959) 294-315, 309, n.1.

250 Sinker, Testaments, 14, n.8.

251 M. de Jonge, *Testaments* (1953), 51f.; see also his forthcoming article 'Light on Paul from the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs?' (§ 3.b)

252 B. Rigaux,, 455f.

approach is that the Testaments were of a later date than the letters of Paul. Rigaux has presented his readers with several other arguments that we will discuss later on. The problem of this hypothesis is that one cannot easily explain the reason why the author chose exactly this phrase from the letters of Paul [253].

43. *Paul dependent on TL*

As early as 1689, the pronouncement of Paul became an argument for the early existence of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs. Since Paul alluded to—or quoted from—TL 6:11, a *terminus ante quem* was provided for these documents, about 50 or 51 C.E. This was the opinion of Grabe[254], whose view was shared by several other scholars, such as Charles[255], Conybeare[256], Friedländer[257], and more recently Argyle[258]. The underlying idea is here that Paul is later than the original Greek text of the Testaments. The differences between TL 6:11 and 1 Thess. 2:16c are to be explained by either assuming that Paul quoted in a loose way or was borrowing his quotation from a Greek text that differed from the present text in the various manuscripts of TL. Charles seems to suggest that Paul quoted the so-called α-text on the basis of 1 Thess.2:16c in the western text form with the addition of τοῦ θεοῦ, but Conybeare thinks this improbable, and opts for the β-text

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253 It is not clear to me why Haupt, *Testament*, 25, n.68 adduces the following reasoning against this hypothesis: 'Aber ein Christ dürfte kaum den "antijüdischen" Abschnitt 1 Thess.2,13-16 zum Vorbild einer so scharfen, gegen Sichem gerichteten Polemik genommen haben'.

254 J. E. Grabe, *Spicilegium sanctorum patrum (...)*, I, Oxford (1689) ²1700, 138; see esp. H. J. de Jonge, Die Patriarchentestamente von Roger Bacon bis Richard Simon, in M. de Jonge, *Studies*, 3-42, 34.

255 Ch.xliv; Ch.41 app.; idem, Testaments, 291f., 308n.; Charles, *The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*, London 1908, 42 and Intr.lxxxv sq. ('From the evidence presently to be adduced, it will be clear that St. Paul was thoroughly familiar with the Greek translation of the Testaments', sc. in the α-recension).

256 F. C. Conybeare (review of both Charles's text and translation), *RevThPh* 4 (1908) 373-382, 377.

257 G. Friedländer, *The Jewish Sources of the Sermon on the Mount*, London 1911.

258 A. W. Argyle, The Influence of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs upon the New Testament, *ET* 63 (1951/52) 256-258, 257: 'Indeed he definitely quotes from them'.

as Paul's source[259]. This hypothesis was mainly based on the formal parallel between the words in TL and those in Paul and on the conviction that Paul wrote his letter in a time that the Testaments were already current in their Greek form, but its defenders did not make clear why Paul would have chosen this phrase for his letter to the Thessalonians.

44. *Some other arguments of Rigaux*

As we have mentioned already there were other considerations in the argumentation of Rigaux that led him to the conviction that the text of Paul was inserted in the passage of TL.

1. His main point is that the text in Paul's letter is an insoluble part of the passage in question, since it cannot be detached from 2:16b in view of the parallelism. On the other hand, the text of TL is most probably an interpolation, which is not only absent from the Armenian, but has also a very inconsistent textual tradition. We have seen that the reference to the Armenian α-recension is not convincing, and that the text of TL 6:11 is an integral part of the section 6:7-11 and that its location is well established by the wording of 7:1. Although I do agree with the view of Rigaux that 1 Thess.2:16c is part of the Pauline text, it seems necessary to add that the phrase in Paul's letter presents us with some difficulties that have led some scholars to guess that it was a glossema. One should notice the fact that the adversative δέ suits the context of TL better than that in Paul's text[260], in spite of the parallelism.

2. Rigaux observes that the variety of readings in TL 6:11 is impressive, whereas Paul's text is well attested. One should not overlook the variant readings of 1 Thess. 2:16c. In the approach of Rigaux, 'les variantes du texte de Paul se sont reportées sur le texte de Lévi, tandis que le texte de Paul ne porte pas trace d'une influence venant de celui de Lévi'[261]. This statement is difficult to understand. First of all, one has to admit the possibility that the

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259 R. H. Charles, Mr. Conybeare and "Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs", *RevThPh* 4 (1908) 536-540, does not react upon the observation of Conybeare with respect to 1 Thess.2:16.

260 Cf. the rendering *enim* in some Latin texts, cf. *denn* in Luther's translation.

261 Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 455.

textual tradition could have been developed according to different patterns in both texts. One has to notice that ἔφθασεν in Paul's text has been transformed into ἔφθακεν in B D* Ψ pc., a reading that is not attested in the texts of TL here. The reading αὐτούς instead of ἐπ' αὐτούς is found only in a Catena text on Paul, whereas it is found in TL in *e a f c*. Both times this reading can be explained by the fact that φθάνω c. acc. with a comparative aspect is usual in Greek, whereas the construction with ἐπί in the meaning 'arrive at', 'come over', although not impossible in Greek, is more frequently attested in biblical Greek and in Jewish hellenistic writings. The reading αὐτούς, therefore, can have crept into the texts of the Pauline Catena and the Mss. of TL independently as a 'correction'. The inversion of ἐπ' αὐτούς and ἡ ὀργή is more difficult to explain. In my view, one has to consider the possibility that the text of *d g m* might have preserved the original order here: ἔφθασεν δὲ ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἡ ὀργή. The direct connection of the verb with the preposition is usual in biblical texts (LXX, cf. also Mt 12:28par.); if we are correct in our judgment that the omission of the preposition is a later correction, all other Mss., except for *b l*, are indirect witnesses to the place of 'on them' before 'the wrath'. The reading of *b l* may have been also a later correction to connect verb and subject more closely, a correction that may have taken place in B 1739 and Origen independently. There is no need to assume that there was any interaction between the readings in Tl and in Paul's letter.

3. Another argument of Rigaux is that the absolute use of ἡ ὀργή is a characteristic feature of Paul ('terme technique'), whereas the usage of the author of the Testaments is to qualify it as wrath of God (τοῦ θεοῦ). However, in order to sustain that he refers to TR 4:4 and TL 6:11 only. As to the first passage the following has to be observed: *n c-h-i-j* omit the passage , *g* adds τοῦ θεοῦ before, *e* after ἡ ὀργή, *b l d m f* may have preserved the original text here: ἡ ὀργὴ κυρίου. The second passage cannot be adduced to settle the question, since it is exactly the text for which he wanted to show that it followed the usage of the author. But here again the original reading may be ἡ ὀργὴ τοῦ κυρίου attested in all Mss. except *c-h-i-j*. The change from κυρίου to θεοῦ (ΚῩ > Θ̄Υ ) is not uncommon in biblical Greek and is, in our case,

not necessarily prompted by the western text of 1 Thess.2:16c. Nor is it necessary that this western text was influenced by the alternative reading in TL. Just as in the OT and in its Greek pendant the LXX , Paul can use the term 'wrath' or 'anger' in absolute form (Rm. 5:9; 12:19; 13:5; 1 Thess.1:10) as meaning 'the wrath of God', an expression which he uses elsewhere (Rm. 1:18; Eph. 5:6; Col. 3:6). The western reading in 1 Thess.2:16c arose not from the *c-h-i-j* text of TL, but from Paul's use of the term elsewhere.

45. *A common source*

1. A last possibility is that the relation between Paul and the author of TL is that both writers are dependent on a common tradition. Vorstman, although preferring another solution, already judged that this is a realistic alternative: 'sed rogari potest, an de communi fonte hîc cogitandum non sit'[262]. He was put on this trace by C. I. Nitzsch who had proposed this solution: 'Concedendum enim Nitzschio (pag.23)[263] est, universam illam, tritam et divertissimis causis convenientem, sententiam utrique scriptori succurrere potuisse'[264]. Even Rigaux admitted that this could be 'une autre solution'[265]: 'Paul a pu de lui-même reprendre un diction juif appliqué originairement aux pécheurs ou aux ennemis d'Israel'[266]. This very view has been expressed by other scholars, such as Dibelius[267], Friedrich[268] and Michel[269].

2. The problem of the common source is that it is a conjecture, for which one cannot adduce testimonies that are really

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262 Vorstman, *Disquisitio*, 23.

263 C. I. Nitzschius, *Commentatio critica de Testamentis Duodecim Patriarcharum libro V. T. Pseudepigrapho*, Wittenberg 1810, 23.

264 Vorstman, *Disquisitio*, 26, n.3.

265 Rigaux, *Thessaloniciens*, 113, n.1.

266 Rigaux, *o.c.*, 456, who also writes, 'Il n'y aurait rien d'étonnant que la parole appartînt au language du judaïsme postérieur'.

267 M. Dibelius, *An die Thessalonicher*, Tübingen ²1927, *i.l.*: 'Vielleicht wird hier wie dort eine jüdische Wendung wiedergegeben'.

268 G. Friedrich, *Der erste Brief an die Thessalonicher*, in J. Becker, *Der Brief an die Galater* (etc.), Göttingen 1981, 227: 'im Judentum anscheinend geläufig'.

269 O. Michel, Fragen zu 1 Thessalonicher 2,14-16, in W. Eckert, *Antijudaismus im Neuen Testament?* München 1967, 50-59, 58: 'Beide Zeugnisse sind wohl aus älteren vorgegebenen Material abzuleiten'.

convincing. Vorstmann already noticed that one cannot deny the possibility of a fons communis ('Quod ego negare non possum'), but that one does not know that source ('quamvis fontem non possim indicare'). Several scholars have suggested that it must have been an apocalyptic text, as Marshall writes: 'more likely that a form of word used in apocalyptic writings has been used by both authors', Fitzer vaguely speaks of 'geläufiges Gut eschatologischer Vorstellungen', or, even vaguer, assumes that for both authors the phrase was 'ein im Gedächtnis bewahrter Satz'. When W. Lock speaks of a 'half stereotyped rabbinical formula'[270], he does not give any parallel. When Bammel assumes a 'Fülle der Parallelen'[271], he does not explicitly mention a truly parallel text It is true that both in the Old Testament[272] and in Qumranic writings mention of the divine wrath is often made with respect to the ennemies of Israel and not seldom also with regard to Israel[273]. The characteristic formula of Paul in 1 Thess.2:16c and of the author of the Testaments in TL 6:11 is not found.

3. An interesting suggestion to explain the formula has been made on the basis of Jub. 30:26, where Gen.35:5, 'And the *dread* of the Lord was upon all the cities (etc.)' is followed, but with the addition 'for *terror* had fallen upon them'[274]. This suggests that the text of the Hebrew verse (...ויהי חתת אלהים על) was varied with ויגע חתת עליהם. If there was in the course of the tradition a misreading of חתת as חמת, the reading of TL 6:11 and 1 Thess.2:16c could be explained: φθάνω being a possible rendering of נגע (cf. φθάνει ἐπ' αὐτοὺς ἡ κακία, Jdg 20:34). Although there is no trace of such a misreading in the Targumic and rabbinic tradition, one may consider this a possibility to explain the origin of the pertinent

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270 W. Lock, Thessalonians (First Epistle of), in Hastings, *Dictionary of the Bible* IV, Edinburgh $^{5}$1906, 745f.

271 Bammel, Judenverfolgung, 309, n.1.

272 One may compare Numb.12:9; 16:22; 1 Chron.27:24; 2 Chron.19:2.10; 25:15; 32:25; Ps. 78 (77): 21.31.

273 Cf. Baarda, 'Maar de toorn is over hen gekomen...', 56-58 (cf. notes 294ff.).

274 This solution is mentioned by Ch.41 app. with a reference to H. Rönsch, *Das Buch der Jubiläen oder die kleine Genesis*, Leipzig 1874, 390f. (cf. *ZwTh* 1875, 278f.).

phrase in the Levi tradition[275]. In that case one might have here an indication for a common source, if we would know that the phrase already existed in Greek in the days of Paul and of the author of TL.

46. *A personal preference*

1. One cannot say that 80 years after Frame's conclusion that the problem is 'still unsettled' things have become much different. Whatever solution will be chosen, one has to consider that the relation between 1 Thess. 2:16 and TL 6:11 must be found in a Greek text: Paul quoted a Greek text of TL, or the author of TL has quoted Paul's Greek letter, or both depend on a Greek source they had in common. Otherwise the collocation of the words ἔφθασεν δέ, εἰς τέλος, ἐπ' αὐτούς and ἡ ὀργή cannot be explained. If our suggestions with respect to text and setting of the phrase in TL 6 were correct, it is an integral part of the text on the Shechem episode. This makes it less likely that the author of TL borrowed it from Paul's Epistle.

2. Let us assume for the moment that Paul quoted from a text as we have it now in the Greek TL, can we explain why he did so? Is it possible to explain why TL 6:11 and its setting led him to his reference of that verse. The context of the phrase in TL gives as a reason that the Canaanites, c.q. the Sichemites, had persecuted Abraham (6:9), who for Paul is the father of all true believers. In 1 Thess.2:13-16 Paul deals with the Jewish believers in Christ who suffer persecution from the side of the other Jews in Judea. The Sichemites or Canaanites are an example of a people who are opposed in several ways to other men and women (6:9f.), just as the 'other Jews' who persecute Paul's Jewish brothers turn out to be against all men, and so displease God (1 Thess.2:15f.). It is obvious that in the case of the Sichemites or Canaanites the wrath of God

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[275] This is apparently the gist of the observation of M. de Jonge, Notes, 145 (*Studies*, 260), n.49, who writes: 'T.L.VI,11 may go back to a phrase in Or.Levi—see Jub.XXX,5 and XXX,26 (comp.Gen.XXXV.5)—and may therefore be earlier than the present Testaments'. This would imply that Paul might have quoted this phrase from TL, but cautiously De Jonge adds, 'but did this phrase exist in Greek so as to be quoted by a Christian in the first century?'.

had fallen upon them (6:11), in the same way Paul expresses as his conviction that the wrath is at work against the persecutors of the Messiah believers (1 Thess.2:16c)[276]. What Paul may have done here is to read the history of his own period back into the narrative of the Shechem episode, by which he identifies the 'other Jews' with the Canaanites or Sichemites and the family of Abraham with the Jewish Messiah believers. This might look strange, but it is not much more unusual than the hermeneutical method applied to the Hagar-Sarah episode in Gal.4, where the persecution of Isaak by Esau is applied to respectively the Messiah believers and those Jews who do not follow Jesus, but persecute his followers.

3. If this suggestion is not too wide off the mark, we might assume that Paul had in mind a Greek version of the Shechem episode in which mention was made of the final wrath to which he refers in 1 Thess.2:16c. Does this mean that he had read the Greek text of the Testament of Levi, which was as we have assumed a Jewish-Christian work? In that case we have to assume that the Greek text of the Testament of Levi was pre-Pauline. If he did not quote from this work itself, then he must have had an almost similar Greek text at his disposal which combined the idea of the final divine wrath with the idea of persecution of the pious people, which then in its turn was used by the author of the Greek Testament of Levi also. This is, of course, a mere guess and it has the weakness of all conjectures that it cannot be proven. This is, however, true for all the solutions that has been offered to the problematic relation between TL 6:11 and 1 Thess. 2:16c.

*Epilogue*

The text of 1 Thess.2:16c occasioned me to read TL 6:11 in its context. This resulted in a commentary on the Shechem episode in the Testament of Levi and a comparison with some other retellings of the narrative of Gen.34 in hellenistic Jewish literature and in midrashic texts. It became clear that, notwithstanding several common elements with other retellings, there are also interesting

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276 For the problem of the difficult aorist tense cf. Baarda, 'Maar de toorn is over hen gekomen...', 50-54, esp. notes 245ff., 264ff.

differences in the Levi passages dealing with the Shechem episode. I have not entered into the question of whether these passages have an anti-Samaritan thrust, which scholars have assumed for some other Jewish authors dealing with the passage on the Shechem attack. The juxtaposition of the investiture as a priest and the vengeance of the rape of Dinah at the cost of the foolish Sichemites do not point to a specific period of the Jewish-Samaritan struggles in the Greek text that we have now before us. Whether this was the case in the Hebrew or Aramaic sources used by the author of TL we do not know. The Jewish-Christian author of the Greek TL may have shared the usual attitude towards Samaritans, but this was not what the Greek author wanted to delineate in his retelling. His main purpose was to exonerate Levi from every blame in the Shechem episode.

# The Atonement in the Interaction of Greeks, Jews, and Christians

Jan N. Bremmer

When the orthodox-Calvinist readers of the Protestant Dutch daily *Trouw* opened their issue of April 4, 1992, they were in for an unpleasant surprise. Only two weeks before Easter, H.S. Versnel, Leiden professor of Ancient History, stated in a two-page article that it was pagan ideas which had given birth to the Christian notion of the atonement. According to him, the Jewish tradition does not furnish any real passages of an 'effective (vicarious) death'. Relevant parallels occur only in the contemporary, pagan mentality (but see below p. 86) of the first two centuries AD, during which period we find the widespread conviction that the sacrifice of one's own life can have *in general* (Versnel's italics) a salvific, meaningful function. In the following days and weeks the paper published a number of reactions from theologians and laymen—not always satisfactory ones, one regrets to have to say.[1] The most detailed response was not published in *Trouw* itself but in the Christian weekly *Hervormd Nederland* by H.J. de Jonge, the Leiden professor of New Testament Studies, who, on the basis of the Prayer of Azariah in Daniel 3, chapters 6 and 7 of II Maccabees, and a passage in the Testament of Moses, argued that a Jew-

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[1] Versnel's original article (7-14), the reactions (15-47) and his reply (48-56) have been collectively published in L. Hoogerwerf (ed.), *Het hek is van de dam*, Amsterdam 1992. Versnel (= Versnel 1992a) based his article mainly on two of his earlier publications: Quid Athenis et Hierosolymis? Bemerkungen über die Herkunft von Aspekten des "effective death", in B.A.G.M. Dehandschutter and J.W. Van Henten (eds.), *Die Entstehung der jüdischen Martyrologie*, Leiden 1989, 162-96 (= Versnel 1989a), and Jezus Soter - Neos Alkestis? Over de niet-joodse achtergrond van een christelijke doctrine, *Lampas* 22 (1989) 219-42 (= Versnel 1989b).

ish background adequately explains the origin of the Christian idea of the atonement.[2] This debate circles around texts from the period which has long interested Adam van der Woude and a discussion of some of the points at issue may therefore be of interest to him. As my expertise is primarily in Greek and Roman religion, I shall concentrate on the pagan background of the early Christian notions of atonement. This contribution makes some introductory observations on the New Testament before examining first the earlier Jewish evidence for a vicarious death, second the role played by contemporary society, and third IV Maccabees; there follows a brief epilogue, by way of conclusion.

Let us then start with the founder of Christianity himself. Versnel (1992a, 8f) has rightly stressed that Jesus himself did not speak about the vicarious function of his death. The words ascribed to him by Mark (10:45) that he came 'to give his life a ransom for many' are most likely not an authentic Jesus logion, although not all New Testament scholars would subscribe to this view.[3] In any case, it was especially Paul who promoted the idea of the atonement to the centre of Christian theology. If we take a closer look at the literature of the first Christians, though, we soon realise that they did not interpret the execution of Jesus in a uniform way. In the New Testament we can discern at least two approaches, which draw on different traditions with rather different theological aims.

The terminology relating to Jesus' death sometimes employs the root **hilask*, the LXX translation of the Hebrew *kipper*, as in Rom. 3:25, Heb. 2:7 and above all 1 John 2:2. This usage is related to the cult of the Temple, in particular to the sacrifice of the High Priest on the Day of Atonement.[4] On the other hand, in Pauline soteriology we find the formula 'Christ (he) died for us' or 'he died for our sins'.[5] It is probable that the reception of this

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[2] For De Jonge's article (1992a), Versnel's reaction (= Versnel 1992b) and De Jonge's rejoinder (1992b) see *Hervormd Nederland* 48 (1992) no. 16, 18 and 19, respectively.

[3] Non-authentic: C. Breytenbach, *Versöhnung. Eine Studie zur paulinischen Soteriologie*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1989, 208; H. Koester, *Ancient Christian Gospels. Their History and Development*, London 1990, 292. *Contra*: P. Stuhlmacher, *Versöhnung, Gesetz und Gerechtigkeit*, Göttingen 1981, 27-42.

[4] M. Hengel, *The Atonement*, London 1981, 50f.

[5] The formula is found, implicit or explicit, in Rom 5:6,8; 14:9,15; 1 Cor.

expression by Paul cannot be separated from the suffering of the righteous man in order to bear the iniquities of many as in Isaiah 53, a chapter that almost certainly lies in the background of at least 1 Cor. 15:3b. Echoes from Isaiah 53 can also be found in Paul's views on our reconciliation with God through Jesus in 2 Cor. 5:18-20 and Rom. 5:1.10f. But even if Paul was inspired by Isaiah 53, it is generally agreed that he did not derive the 'dying-for-us/many' formula from this enigmatic chapter. Recent studies also agree that Paul did not invent the formula: he found it among, or heard it from, other Christians. This must mean that this particular interpretation dates to the years shortly after Jesus' death, perhaps already to the thirties AD, as De Jonge (1992a) suggests.[6] Where or how did the early Christians encounter the formula? It does not occur in the Old Testament, but one cannot exclude *a priori* the possibility that they found this formula in their own religious tradition, as De Jonge (1992a) has rightly argued. Yet is this likely? Let us take a closer look at the three testimonies, which de Jonge has put forward in order to support his case.

1. *The Jewish evidence*

The historically latest piece of evidence adduced by De Jonge is the Testament of Moses, which he dates to the first half of the first century AD. Its chapter 9 relates the story of Taxo and his seven sons, who will withdraw into a grotto and, presumably, find there a violent death. Then God 'will come to work vengeance on the nations' (10:7) and 'he will fix you (Israel) firmly in the heaven of the stars, in the place of their habitations' (10:8-10). The text is not very elaborate, and it is hard not to concur with Priest when he concludes that the author 'perhaps, has hinted at the idea of

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1:13; 8:11; 15:3; 2 Cor. 5:14,15,21; Gal. 3:13; 1 Thess. 5:10.

6 Cf. Breytenbach, *Versöhnung*, p. 209-11; somewhat differently, M. de Jonge, Jesus' death for others and the death of the Maccabean martyrs, in T. Baarda *et al.* (eds.), *Text and Testimony. Essays on New Testament and Apocryphal Literature in Honour of A.F.J. Klijn*, Kampen 1988, 142-51. Breytenbach's extensive bibliography has overlooked S.K. Williams, *Jesus' Death as Saving Event: The Background and Origin of a Concept*, Missoula 1975, 5-56, 203-29; note now also D. Seeley, *The Noble Death. Graeco-Roman Martyrology and Paul's Concept of Salvation*, Sheffield 1990 (to be read with the review by J.W. van Henten, *J. Stud. Jud.* 23, 1992, 134-7).

vicarious propitiation, although this is not clear'.[7] Moreover, there are hardly any signs that Paul or other New Testament authors knew or drew upon this story. Finally, one cannot treat the problem of the dating as lightly as De Jonge has done. Various recent discussions of this thorny question have presented weighty arguments in favour of the thesis that at least part of the Testament goes back to the Maccabean period.[8] Indeed, Taxo's story looks very much like having originated in or shortly after the times of persecution.

The second passage adduced by De Jonge is II Maccabees 6 and 7. There can be little doubt that the idea of a vicarious, atoning death is at least *in nuce* present in the accounts of the deaths of Eleazar and of a mother with her seven sons. Particularly suggestive in this respect are the words of the youngest son: 'I, following my brother's example, give up my body and soul for the sake of the laws of our forefathers, praying to God that he speedily have mercy upon our nation. May you through being afflicted and scourged come to acknowledge that He alone is God. With me and my brothers may the Almighty put an end to the rightful anger inflicted upon our entire people' (7:37f.). The author of II Maccabees, it is clear, deliberately intended to stress the importance of this prayer, since the next chapter describes the *Wende* in the Maccabean revolt and the successes of Judas and his followers. After the victory against Nicanor the 'entire community turned in supplication to the merciful LORD, praying that He would be completely reconciled (*katallagènai*) with His slaves' (8:29, tr. J.A. Goldstein).

Unfortunately, there is no way that we can be certain about the exact time of origin of this story. In the present form of II Maccabees chapters 6 and 7 are well integrated, but several scholars have suspected that originally these chapters did not belong to the source, the unabridged work by Jason of Cyrene. In

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[7] J. Priest, Testament of Moses, in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha* I, London 1983, 919-34, esp. p. 923.

[8] Cf. Priest, Testament of Moses, 920f.; E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 B.C. - A.D. 135)* III.1, Edinburgh 1986, 278-88 (G. Vermes); J.W. van Henten, *De joodse martelaren als grondleggers van een nieuwe orde*, Diss. Leiden 1986, 157.

any case, a connection with the time of the revolt or not long after seems not improbable.[9]

The final witness is the Prayer of Azariah in Daniel (3:38-40 LXX, tr. M. Hengel), where in the fiery furnace Azariah prays to God:

> ... like holocausts of rams and bulls
> like ten thousand of fat sheep,
> so may our sacrifice be before you today,
> to bring about atonement with you.

In this prayer, which probably dates to the times of the revolt against Antiochus IV, the inspiration clearly derives from the cultic sacrifices in the Temple of Jerusalem. It should be noted, though, that this particular case was brought about by an emergency situation. The three youths offered themselves, since the Temple was no longer available for the performance of proper acts of atonement, on account of its desecration by the Seleucid king.[10]

What may we conclude from these texts? De Jonge is surely right in saying that the idea of a vicarious, atoning death was not wholly unknown in Jewish tradition. It seems to have arisen during or in the aftermath of the Maccabean revolt: a perfectly understandable time of origin. On the other hand, Versnel (1992b) is equally right in stressing that the idea of a vicarious sacrifice is more hinted at than fully elaborated in these passages. Moreover, the Maccabean martyrs also die for their own sins (7:18, 32), which hardly fits a proper 'Sühnopfertheologie'.[11] Even though De Jonge (1992b) has proved his point to a certain extent, he nevertheless runs subsequently into great trouble. As he honestly admits, the Christian interpretation did not draw directly on any of these three texts. To escape from this cul-de-sac, he suggests that the adduced passages were only the tip of an invisible iceberg within the Jewish tradition. We may safely assume, according to De Jonge, a widespread discussion of the

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[9] For a discussion of the dating problems see Van Henten, *De joodse martelaren*, 170.

[10] Cf. K. Koch, *Deuterokanonische Zusätse zum Danielbuch* II, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1987, 59; note also his discussion of the connection between the *Prayer* and the idea of vicarious sacrifice (82-4).

[11] As is observed by H.-J. Klauck, *4 Makkabäerbuch = Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistisch-römischer Zeit* III.6, Gütersloh 1989, 670.

subject of the atoning death of a few for many.[12] Needless to say, there is simply not a thread of evidence for this suggestion.

We can perhaps go further and suggest that it is even improbable that the early Christians would have drawn on this particular tradition. The passage in Daniel seems too much determined by the particular circumstances of its time of origin to be a likely source of inspiration for later periods. Regarding II Maccabees, we may wonder whether the early followers of Jesus would have been interested in the Maccabees, since there is astonishing little information found about them in early rabbinic writings.[13] Moreover, Eleazar is prepared to die 'for the revered and holy laws' (6:28); the youths stress that they are prepared to die for the 'laws of our forefathers' (7:37) and Judas encourages his soldiers to be ready to die 'for their laws and their country' (8:21). Similarly, in the Testament of Moses, which seems to have been the work of a schismatical Levitical group,[14] Taxo prefers to die rather than to 'transgress the commandments of the Lord of Lords, the God of our fathers' (9:6). These martyrs were clearly highly motivated by their adherence to the ancestral institutions of the Jews.[15] And though we have perhaps become less certain in our pronouncements regarding Jesus' attitude towards the Halakah and Torah,[16]

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12 De Jonge (1992b): 'De drie plaatsen zijn slechts de min of meer toevallig bewaarde uitlopers op schrift van een daarachter schuilgaand, niet meer waarneembaar, maar veilig te veronderstellen, veelvuldig spreken over verzoenend sterven van enkelingen voor velen'.

13 Cf. G. Stemberger, The Maccabees in Rabbinic Tradition, in F. García Martínez, A. Hilhorst, C. Labuschagne (eds.), *The Scriptures and the Scrolls. Studies in Honour of A.S. van der Woude on the Occasion of His 65th Birthday*, Leiden 1992, 193-203.

14 Cf. J. Tromp, Taxo, the Messenger of the Lord, *J. Stud. Jud.* 21 (1990) 200-09.

15 Cf. H.G. Kippenberg, Die jüdischen Überlieferungen als *patrioi nomoi*, in R. Faber and R. Schlesier (eds.), *Die Restauration der Götter*, Würzburg 1986, 45-60; Kippenberg, *Die vorderasiatischen Erlösungsreligionen in ihrem Zusammenhang mit der antiken Stadtherrschaft*, Frankfurt 1991, 179-217.

16 See most recently J.D.G. Dunn, *Jesus, Paul and the Law*, London 1990; P. Richardson and S. Westerholm (eds.), *Law in Religious Communities in the Roman Period. The Debate over Torah and Nomos in Post-Biblical Judaism and Early Christianity*, Waterloo, Ontario 1991; I. Boer (ed.), *Jesus und das jüdische Gesetz*, Stuttgart 1992.

it remains highly improbable that the first Christians would have felt particularly attracted to this specific tradition.

There remains one final problem. De Jonge continuously speaks of one tradition, but the three youths and the Maccabean martyrs can hardly be reduced to one common stream. The Daniel passage drew its inspiration from the Temple cult, but this is clearly not the case with II Maccabees. Can we make any progress regarding the latter case? The problem has recently been studied in depth by Van Henten, who has looked for examples of vicarious death in both the Greek and Jewish traditions. He admits that an influence from the tragedies of Euripides is possible, but also thinks of Jewish examples of a non-cultic reconciliation with God, such as the offer of Moses to re-ascend Mt Sinai in order to reconcile the people with God after their worship of a golden calf (Ex. 32:30-4), and also the murder by Phinehas of an Israelite and his Midianitish woman after Israel began 'to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab' (Num. 25). These cases, though, do not speak of a vicarious death and that is why a Greek inspiration deserves a closer attention.

We know that Greek tragedy was very popular in third-century Egypt. Ptolemy II Philadelphus (285-47) organized a circle of seven tragic poets, the 'Pleiad', of whom at least some were connected to the Museum: Alexander Aitolos was in charge of collecting the texts of the tragedians, Lycophron those of the comedians. Ptolemy IV Philopator (222-04) even wrote a tragedy himself: Adonis. The numerous surviving names of authors and lists of titles indicate an interest in tragedy which lasted well into the Roman period.[17] Among the tragedians, Euripides remained very popular, as the steady flow of papyri with fragments and hypotheses of his tragedies show. This can clearly be seen in the Exagoge of the Jewish tragedian Ezekiel, whose play is, 'both in small points of phraseology and style and in the larger realm of dramatic technique and structure, much influenced by Euripides.'[18] Our evidence is scanty, but Ezekiel shows that some Jews in

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17 Cf. M. Parca, *Ptocheia, or Odysseus in disguise at Troy*, Atlanta 1991, 96-112 (with extensive bibliographies).

18 Euripides: H. Kuch, Zum Euripides-Rezeption im Hellenismus, *Klio* 60 (1978) 191-202; W. Luppe, Literarische Texte: Drama, *Arch. f. Papyrusf.* 37

the time of the Maccabees did not consider Greek tragedy unacceptable. Fergus Millar has argued that although periodic festival games are not explicitly attested in pre-Roman times, 'it is...to be assumed that they took place, bearing in mind the general character of the age'.[19] As Palestine was ruled for more than a century by the Ptolemies, Jerusalem had a gymnasium and an *ephebeion* (II Maccabees 4:12), and since the theatre was very popular in the Greek world, it is hard to believe that Palestine never saw the performance of a tragedy in the time of the Maccabees; after all, a theatre even existed in the Greek city of Aï Khanoum in Afghanistan.[20] Van Henten himself has pointed to the resemblance between the suicides of Razis (II Macc. 14) and Menoeceus in Euripides' tragedy Phoenissae, both of whom first wound themselves before throwing themselves down the walls of their cities. As Euripides is the one author in whose tragedies dying for the good of the people plays an important role and the dramatist whose work was widely performed and read during that period, an inspiration from his tragedies is more than likely, even though the Phoenissae itself gained its greatest popularity in Late Antiquity.[21] As the scarcity of papyri shows, the Greek funeral orations, which are also compared by Van Henten, enjoyed far less popularity.[22]

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(1991) 77-91, esp. 78-86. Ezekiel: H. Jacobson, *The* Exagoge *of Ezekiel*, Cambridge 1983, 23.

19 F. Millar, in Schürer, *History of the Jewish People* II, Edinburgh 1979, 44.

20 For the nature and the degree of Jewish acculturation in the time of the Maccabees see also the interesting reflections of E. Will and C. Orrieux, *Ioudaïsmos-Hellènismos. Essai sur le judaïsme judéen à l' époque hellénistique*, Nancy 1986, 120-36.

21 Euripides: Van Henten, *De joodse martelaren*, 141. His comparison with the Roman *devotio* (ibidem, 141-4) is much less persuasive. The contacts between the Jews and the Romans were not so extensive in the period of the second century, cf. M. Hadas-Lebel, *Jérusalem contre Rome*, Paris 1990, 19-31. *Phoenissae*: J.M. Bremer, The popularity of Euripides' Phoenissae in Late Antiquity, in *Actes du VIIe congres de la F.I.E.C.* I, Budapest 1983, 281-8.

22 Euripides and the theme of 'effective death': see most recently E.A.M.E O'Connor-Visser, *Aspects of Human Sacrifice in the Tragedies of Euripides*, Diss. Amsterdam 1987; D.D. Hughes, *Human Sacrifice in Ancient Greece*, London 1991, 73f. Funeral orations: Van Henten, *De joodse martelaren*, 164-6.

## 2. *Vicarious sacrifice in contemporary society*

As we have seen, Versnel (1992a) does not look for Paul's inspiration in the Jewish tradition but in the mentality of the pagan society of the first two centuries AD. He recognises of course the prominence of the theme of vicarious death in Euripides, but argues that after so many centuries an influence from drama is unlikely (1989a, 189f.; 1989b, 232; 1992a, 10f.). His discussion of the early Christian views of Jesus' death is the latest of a series of learned articles in which he has collected and analysed the theme of vicarious death in Greek, Roman and Hellenistic culture.[23] Yet there are various reasons why I hesitate to follow him in this particular case. We shall therefore take a closer look at the chronology, geography and content of the evidence adduced by Versnel in support of his case.

Versnel's point of departure is the *devotio pro principe*, the phenomenon that soldiers or private persons were willing to sacrifice their life for the health of the Roman emperor. This phenomenon started with Caesar and gained weight with Augustus and his successors. The Senate, the army and the Roman people now publicly declared that the salvation of the state and its people depended on the well-being of the emperor. This development may be clearly discerned in the adulatory gestures of some Romans who, as Suetonius tells us in his biography of Caligula, 'even vowed to fight as gladiators, and others posted placards offering their lives, if the ailing prince were spared' (c. 14, tr. J.C. Rolfe). There can be no doubt, then, that the phenomenon of vicarious sacrifice existed in the first century AD.

Yet none of the examples adduced by Versnel takes place outside the immediate Roman world and none takes place during the rule of Augustus and Tiberius.[24] His only contemporary

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[23] H.S. Versnel, Destruction, *devotio* and despair in a situation of anomy: the mourning for Germanicus in triple perspective, in *Perennitas. Studi in onore di Angelo Brelich*, Rome 1980, 541-618; idem, Self-sacrifice, compensation and the anonymous gods, *Entretiens Hardt* XXVII, Geneva 1981, 135-85; Versnel 1989a,b.

[24] The exception is the vow of a tribunus plebis, who 'devoted' himself 'in the Iberian manner' to Augustus in 27 BC (Cassius Dio 53.20). In this case the *devotio* derives explicitly from the custom of Iberian warriors of sacrificing their life for their general and cannot be adduced as an example of a

example outside Rome concerns Antony, Cleopatra and a group of friends, who called themselves *Synapothanoumenoi*, a title derived from a Greek comedy about two lovers who, presumably, were going to die together but were saved in the nick of time. It seems to me highly important to note that Antony and Cleopatra evidently derived their inspiration from Greek drama, in view of the fact that Versnel considers this unlikely in the case of the early Christians. In any case, this one example quoted by him is not 'indicative of a general tendency of this period'.[25]

Whereas the rise to power of the Roman emperor clearly lies at the background of the *devotio pro principe*, this can hardly be the case for another group of examples cited by Versnel. A poem in the Greek Anthology (7.691) celebrates a woman who has given her life for her husband as the 'new Alcestis'. Unfortunately neither author nor date of this poem are known to us, but the theme recurs in other epitaphs of the first and/or second century AD. An epigram of Odessos praises a woman with the words: 'But now instead of me she is dead and has fame and praise, like Alcestis', and a series of sixteen epigrams in a grotto in Sardinia immortalize a woman, who had died for her ill husband, as 'greater than Alcestis' (CIL X 7577). Moreover, the popularity of the theme of Alcestis in this period is shown by the frequent occurrence of the Alcestis story on sarcophagi and the fact that the second-century Aelian (Variae Historiae 14.45) calls Alcestis one of the three Greek women deserving unqualified praise.[26] Once again, the popularity is hardly to be explained without the direct or indirect influence of Euripides' tragedy Alcestis. In fact, Juvenal (6.652f) mentions that women watched performances of the Alcestis story, and Lucian (de Salt. 52) reports that the story

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Roman mentality. Versnel, Destruction, 571 cites the case of the Romans who vowed to fight as gladiators in aid of Caligula as a parallel, but that event took place half a century later.

[25] Antony: Plut. *Ant.* 71, *contra* Versnel, Destruction, 572. Greek drama: plays with this title are attested for Alexis (fr. 213-5 Kassel-Austin) and Diphilus (Test. 12 Kassel-Austin); they were used by Plautus in his *Commorientes*, cf. Terence *Ad.* 6 (prol.).

[26] Alcestis: W.M. Calder III, The Alkestis inscription from Odessos: IGBR $I^2$ 222, *Am. J. Arch.* 79 (1975) 80-3; Versnel, Self-sacrifice, 165. Sarcophagi: M. Schmidt, Alkestis, in *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae* I.1, Basel 1981, 533-44.

was a subject for pantomime. The stage, however, was not operating in a social vacuum. From the first century BC onwards, the Roman and, in its wake, the Hellenistic upper-class experienced a gradual development from a conjugal relationship without emotional bonds to a kind of affectionate family.[27] It is through this development that the Alcestis story must have struck a powerful chord among the women of the elite.

This closer relationship between husband and wife can also be found in the Greek novel. In the second-century romance by Achilles Tatius, the heroine Leukippe writes to her beloved Clitophon: 'for you I left my mother and took up the life of a wanderer; for you I suffered shipwreck and fell into the hands of pirates; for you I became a victim for sacrifice and an expiatory sacrifice (*katharmós*) and twice entered the valley of the shadow of death' (5.18, tr. S. Gaselee). Versnel (1989b, 236f) rightly draws attention to this passage, but here too Greek drama may lie in the background. The Greek novelists regularly refer to their narratives, to the plots, actions, and characters which comprise them, in terms of the drama. The metaphorical application of terms drawn from the stage is also apparent in those rare instances in which a narrator refers to his narrative as a whole: for example, Achilles Tatius refers to his romance as *toũ pantòs drámatos* (8.15). Finally, the Byzantine critics frequently employed the term *drãma* to refer to the novel.[28] So once again we are led to think of Greek drama as an important source of inspiration.

A third group among the examples offered by Versnel is constituted by persons who die for those born under the same stars, having the same name, or being next of kin. All these examples date from the second or third century AD. This group deserves further investigation but seems not immediately relevant to our argument.

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[27] For this development see P. Veyne (ed.), *Histoire de la vie privée* I, Paris 1985, 45-59; idem, *La société romaine*, Paris 1991, 88-130 (= *Annales ESC* 33, 1978, 35-63; A. Rousselle, Gestes et signes de la famille dans l'Empire romain, in A. Burguière *et al.* (eds.), *Histoire de la famille* I, Paris 1986, 231-69.

[28] I owe this point to Dirk Obbink, who kindly showed me his forthcoming article 'The drama in the novel'; see now also N. Marini, *Drãma*: possibile denominazione per il romanzo greco d'amore, *St. It. Fil. Class.* 84 (1991) 232-43.

We may even wonder whether we can speak of a 'mentality' (Versnel 1989b, 234; 1992a, 14) regarding these self-sacrifices. They all occur in rather different groups in society, and for rather different motives. Moreover, if such a general mentality really existed, we would not have had epigrams praising women for dying for their husbands. Such deaths, then, would have been perfectly normal and hardly have deserved any mention. The existence of comments on this phenomenon, on the other hand, suggests that society at large considered these examples as something special, as something falling outside the normal mentality.[29]

It is time to conclude this paragraph. We have seen that among the examples adduced by Versnel no example of an 'effective death' of an individual for the whole of the community can be found. Moreover, his examples from the first century all concern the Roman emperor and his Roman subjects. No evidence has as yet been brought forward that this Roman ideology also influenced those in the subjected areas. Since the interpretation of Jesus' execution as a vicarious death is already to be found in the thirties or, at the latest, in the forties of the first century, an influence of the self-sacrificial mentality as argued by Versnel seems to be improbable.

### 3. *IV Maccabees*

Since IV Maccabees plays an important role in recent discussions of the origin of the idea of the atonement, we now turn to this work, with its literary form that of a diatribe and its many motifs derived from the Greek *epitaphios logos.*[30] Taking its inspiration from II Maccabees, it relates the martyrdom of the aged Eleazar and the seven sons with their mother. But unlike its model, we

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[29] For this point I am indebted to the insightful discussion of G. Tellenbach, 'Mentalität', in E. Hastujer *et al.* (eds), *Geschichte, Wirtschaft, Gesellschaft. Festschrift für Clemens Bauer zum 75. Geburtstag* (Berlin, 1974) 11-30. This article has to be added to the extensive bibliography of the 'histoire des mentalités' by W. Frijhoff, in *Geschiedenis, psychologie, mentaliteit*, Amsterdam 1982, 201-7.

[30] See the discussions by Van Henten, *De joodse martelaren*, 178-85 and Klauck, *4 Makkabäerbuch*, 659-62.

now find a clear theology of an 'effective death'. Eleazar is represented as a priest from the house of Aron and he prays 'Be merciful to your people and let our punishment be a satisfaction on their behalf. Make my blood their purificatory sacrifice (*kathársion*) and take my life as a ransom (*antípsychon*) for theirs' (6:28f.). These verses cannot be separated from those in the epilogue, where the author concludes: 'These then, having consecrated themselves for the sake of God, are now honoured...(and) through them...our land (was) purified, since they became, as it were, a ransom (*antípsychon*) for the sin of our nation. Through the blood of these righteous ones and through their propitiating (*hilasteríou*) death the divine providence rescued Israel, which had been shamefully treated' (17:20-22, tr. H. Anderson, slightly adapted).

Once again we can distinguish a Jewish and Greek background in these words and ideas. The purification with blood refers to the Old Testament expiatory sacrifice where blood had to be put on the altar (Lev. 4), and the *hilasteríou* of 17:22 suggests the mercy seat of the ark, which the High Priest had to sprinkle with blood on the Day of Atonement (Lev. 16:14f.).[31] Yet the reminiscences of the Old Testament do not explain completely the theme of vicarious death and it will now hardly come as a surprise that, once again, the most recent commentator upon IV Maccabees sees here the influence of Euripides.[32] It is tempting to agree with him, although another solution seems more exciting. But before we discuss this problem, we will first take a look at the date of IV Maccabees.

We have at least three different possibilities in dating the treatise. First, we can look at the *realia* in the text, such as datable persons or institutions. This approach was taken by the late Russian-Jewish historian Elias Bickerman in 1939, who on the basis of the names of Roman provinces concluded to a date somewhere between 18 and 54 AD; his arguments, however, leave much to be desired. As Van Henten has shown, we can only say on the basis of an 'institutional' approach that the work was written after 72 AD, when Cicilia campestris was re-united with

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31 Klauck, *4 Makkabäerbuch*, ad loc.
32 Klauck, ibidem, 671.

Cilicia aspera.[33] The philosophical ideas of the author are a second possibility.[34] Unfortunately, his mixture of Peripatetic, Stoic, Cynic and Pythagorean *Gedankengut* does not permit a certain dating. According to Jaap Mansfeld, both the first and second century AD remain possible.[35] Finally, we can attempt a dating on the basis of the vocabulary. This approach was taken by Breitenstein, in a careful investigation, in which he has demonstrated that the vocabulary of IV Maccabees is related to that of early Christian literature rather than that of the Septuaginta. Moreover, quite a few words are only attested in authors of the second or even third centuries. Breitenstein has also shown that the author distances himself from the Temple and its cult; it is therefore reasonable to conclude, as do most recent studies, that the treatise has to be dated around 100 AD, if not even somewhat later.[36]

Since the idea of a vicarious death occurs both in Paul and IV Maccabees, two possibilities might seem to present themselves: the similarity is either a case of 'analogy' or of 'genealogy'. The methodological problem encountered here has recently been discussed at length by Jonathan Smith, with his usual erudition and brilliance. He arrives at the conclusion that the *Zeitgeist* can

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[33] E. Bickerman, *Studies in Jewish and Christian History* I, Leiden 1976, 275-81 ($1939^1$). *Contra*: J.W. Van Henten, Datierung und Herkunft des vierten Makkabäerbuches, in J.W. van Henten *et al.* (eds.), *Tradition and Re-Interpretation in Jewish and Early Christian Literature*, Leiden 1986, 136-49. Van Henten is largely followed by Klauck, *4 Makkabäerbuch*, 668f.

[34] These have been investigated by U. Breitenstein, *Beobachtungen zu Sprache, Stil und Gedankengut des Vierten Makkabäerbuch*, Diss. Basel 1976, 131-75; see now also R. Weber, Eusebeia und Logismos. Zum philosophischen Hintergrund von IV. Makkabäer, *J. Stud. Jud.* 22 (1991) 212-34.

[35] Mansfeld (personal communication) also points out that the author's phrasing of his philosophical ideas is highly rhetorical. A close parallel can be found in the Middle-Platonist or Stoic Alcinous, who is also dated to the first or second century AD, cf. J. Whittaker, The Value of Indirect Tradition in the Establishment of Greek Philosophical Texts or the Art of Misquotation, in J.N. Grant (ed.), *Editing Greek and Latin Texts*, New York 1989, 63-95.

[36] Vocabulary: Breitenstein, *Beobachtungen*, 13-29, 171-4 (Temple). Recent studies: Van Henten and Klauck (n. 28). The exception is M. Goodman, who without any argument rejects Breitenstein's results: Schürer, *History of the Jewish People* III.1, 591.

often have a similar impact on different religions. However, when he considers the rise of an increased focus on the 'dying and rising' of the central cult figure both in Christianity and the Late Antique cults of Attis and Adonis as a case of 'analogy (possibly even of shared causality',[37] he has evidently overlooked the fact that there was lively interchange between pagans and Christians in Late Antiquity. In an detailed study of the Christian *discours hagiographique*, Marc van Uytfanghe has demonstrated that Late Antiquity knew of parallel developments among Christians and pagans, but *also* that some pagans developed their ideas in response to and in competition with the Christians.[38] The religious situation in Late Antiquity was too complicated to have its relationships reduced (as Smith does) to either 'analogy' or 'genealogy': both categories have to be taken into account in order to understand properly the religious developments in Late Antiquity. Moreover, we have to be sensitive to the problem of competition between religions, since religions do not exist in isolation from one another but are able to reorganise themselves in the face of a strong challenge by a competitor on the market of symbolic goods. The Counter-Reformation is a good example of a phenomenon which deserves more attention than it has so far received from general historians of religion.

Versnel (1989a, 192; 1989b, 238; 1992a, 11) argues that both Paul and the author of IV Maccabees have arrived independently at the idea of a vicarious death, influenced as they were by the mentality of their contemporaneous society: this would thus be a case of 'analogy'. On the other hand, on the basis of similarities both in vocabulary and expression, S.K. Williams has recently suggested that the Jewish treatise was an important source of inspiration for the Martyrium Polycarpi, the letters of Ignatius, the epistle to the Hebrews, and perhaps even some authentic letters of Paul: this would be a case of 'genealogy'. Unfortunately, Williams has not sufficiently distinguished between parallel passages deriving

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37 J.Z. Smith, *Drudgery Divine. On the Comparison of Early Christianities and the Religions of Late Antiquity*, Chicago and London 1990, esp. 113f.

38 M.J.M. van Uytfanghe, Het 'genre' hagiografie: Christelijke specificiteit versus laat-antieke context, in A. Hilhorst (ed.), *De heiligenverering in de eerste eeuwen van het Christendom*, Nijmegen 1988, 63-98.

from parallel situations, and real parallels.[39] When we find the theme of 'endurance' (*hypomoné)* both in IV Maccabees (16:19) and the letters of Ignatius (Pol. 3:1; Smyr. 9:2), the parallel is generated by the situation of martyrdom, in which steadfastness is highly desired: hardly surprisingly, the quality is frequently mentioned in the acts of the Christian martyrs.[40] Similarly, the designation of the faithful one as an athlete in IV Maccabees (17:16) and Ignatius (Pol. 2:3) derives from a general mentality which is already found in Philo and which was clearly 'produced' by the great love of athletics in the Hellenistic world.[41]

The only really interesting parallel is the word *antípsychon*, which does not occur in the Septuaginta, New Testament or any other of the Apostolic Fathers but occurs twice in IV Maccabees and four times in Ignatius. The word acquires its full theological weight only in IV Maccabees and this makes it difficult to decide whether we here have a case of derivation or a product of an analogous situation. Similar objections can be brought to bear against Williams' comparison between IV Maccabees and Hebrews despite the fact that there is one parallel which is rather striking. In both writings the martyr slain (Eleazar, Jesus) is both priest and offering. Since no other Jewish or Christian author before Hebrews makes a similar claim, the parallel, as Williams persuasively argues, can hardly be discounted. Although an influence from Hebrews, now dated to just before 100 AD,[42] cannot be summarily dismissed, the case does not look sufficiently strong to allow any definitive conclusions to be drawn from it. Since we have already questioned the existence of a self-sacrificial

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[39] *Contra* Williams, *Jesus' Death as saving Event*, 233-53. Cf. Van Uytfanghe, Het 'genre' hagiographie, 77 on analogous responses to analogous situations.

[40] Cf. J. den Boeft and J. Bremmer, Notiunculae martyrologicae IV, *Vigiliae Christianae* 45 (1991) 105-22, esp. 118.

[41] This has been overlooked by B. Dehandschutter, Martyrium und Agon. Uber die Wurzeln der Vorstellung vom *Agon* im vierten Makkabäerbuch, in Van Henten, *Entstehung der jüdischen Martyrologie*, 215-9. Better: Van Henten, *De joodse martelaren*, 192f. For Jews and sport see H.A. Harris, *Greek Athletics and the Jews*, Cardiff 1976; M. Poliakoff, Jacob, Job and other wrestlers: reception of Greek athletics by Jews and Christians in antiquity, *J. Sport History* 11 (1984) 48-85.

[42] All recent commentaries date *Hebrews* before 100 AD, cf. R. McL. Wilson (1987); H.W. Attridge (1987); E. Grässer (1990); H.-F. Weiss (1991).

mentality, as proposed by Versnel, and since Williams still departs from the dating proposed by Bickerman, we shall now turn to the approach which takes into account the possibility of a competition between religions.

Recent studies agree that IV Maccabees was not written in a situation of persecution. Consequently, the question must be asked as to why a Jewish author of around 100 AD would be so interested in the themes of martyrdom, *eusebeia*, adherence to the national tradition and vicarious death. Klauck has stressed that the main theme is a response to the threat of assimilation in the Diaspora.[43] This threat must have been evident, since Jews were well integrated in many Hellenistic cities and could reach the highest positions available in the government.[44] The paradigm of martyrdom enabled the author to dramatise his message and make it attractive to the taste of his time, but why did he also develop the theme of vicarious death, which he found only in embryonic form in his main source, II Maccabees? Did he perhaps aim not only at assimilated Jews but also at those sympathising with the Christians?

Chronologically, the latter possibility can no longer be excluded. We are still insufficiently informed about the period in which Jews and Christians gradually parted on their several ways, but Luke's Acts and the letters of Ignatius (Phld. 6; Mag. 9f) show us that in various cities in Asia Minor the contacts between Jews and Christians were still close around 100 AD.[45] Rather strikingly, later midrashic texts on the Akedah or 'binding' of Isaac preclude the possibility of a vicarious, atoning interpretation in order not to show up Judaism as a religion defective in

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[43] Klauck, *4 Makkabäerbuch*, 664f.

[44] Cf. Den Boeft and Bremmer, Notiunculae, 117; add to their bibliography J.H.M. Strubbe, Joden en Grieken: onverzoenlijke vijanden?, *Lampas* 22 (1989) 188-204; P. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor*, Cambridge 1991.

[45] On the early Christianising Jews and Judaizing Christians see most recently G.P. Luttikhuizen, Vroeg-christelijk Jodendom, in T. Baarda *et al.* (eds), *Jodendom en vroeg christendom: continuïteit en discontinuteit*, Kampen 1991, 163-89; G. Kretschmar, Die Kirche aus Juden und Heiden, in J. van Amersfoort and J. van Oort (eds.), *Juden und Christen in der Antike*, Kampen 1991, 9-43; S.C. Mimouni, Pour une definition nouvelle du judéo-christianisme ancien, *N. Test. Stud.* 38 (1992) 161-86.

comparison with Christianity.[46] Yet is it really impossible to imagine that in the transitional period around 100 AD a Jew tried to convince his fellow Jews, who felt attracted to Christ, of the existence of a comparable figure in their own tradition? Once again, we cannot exclude the influence of Greek drama (see above), but it seems to me that the date of IV Maccabees and its aim leave the possibility of additional Christian influence open.[47]

4. *Conclusion*

When we now return to the debate between De Jonge and Versnel, it will be clear that it is difficult to take sides with either scholar: De Jonge has not demonstrated that the early Christians were influenced by Jewish traditions and Versnel has not proved the existence of a self-sacrifical mentality in the earlier first century. Yet some 'pagan' influence can hardly be denied. When we take into account (1) that Greek was widely spoken in Palestine in Jesus' time, also probably by Jesus himself,[48] (2) that theatres were present in the area, even in Jerusalem,[49] (3) that Euripides' tragedies had already influenced Ezekiel and the author of II Maccabees, (4) that Jews such as Philo (Omnis probus 141) attended Euripides' tragedies, which were widely read and performed in Jesus' time, (5) that Euripides' Bacchae was used by Luke in his Acts and, significantly, later provided the material for

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[46] See the subtle analysis of C.T.R. Hayward, The Sacrifice of Isaac and Jewish Polemic against Christianity, *Cath. Bibl. Quart.* 52 (1990) 292-306.

[47] For the later influence of Maccabees IV on earlier Christianity see most recently G. Nauroy, Les frères Maccabées dans l' exegèse d' Ambroise de Milan ou la conversion de la sagesse judéo-hellénique aux valeurs du martyre chrétien, *Cahiers de Biblia Patristica* (Strasburg) 2 (1989) 215-45; idem, Du combat de la piété à la confession du sang. Une interprétation chrétienne du martyre des Maccabées chez Ambroise de Milan, *Rev. d'Hist. Philos. Rel.* 70 (1990) 49-68.

[48] Palestine: see most recently M. Hengel, *The 'Hellenization' of Judaea in the First Century after Christ*, London 1989, 7-18; G.R. Horsley, *New Documnets Illustrating Early Christianity*, North Ryde 1989, 5-40, esp. 19-22. Jesus: H.D. Betz, Wellhausen's Dictum 'Jesus was not a Christian, but a Jew' in Light of Present Scholarship, *Stud. Theol.* 45 (1991) 83-110 (with further bibliography).

[49] Cf. Jos. BJ 1.21.8 (Caesarea), 11 (Ptolemais, Damascus), Ant. 15.8.1 (Jerusalem), 17.6.3 (Jericho)

a Byzantine poem on Christ's suffering, the Christus patiens,[50] and (6) that dying for the good of the people is an important topic in Euripides' tragedies (above), then an influence, directly or indirectly, from Euripides is also more than likely upon the Jew(s) who first interpreted Jesus' execution as a vicarious death. Unfortunately, our knowledge of the period between Jesus and Paul is extremely limited and most Jewish literature of the period has perished. Surprises, therefore, are not to be excluded. In fact, a forthcoming Qumrân text of the second century BC evokes an eschatological figure, probably the High Priest of the Messianic era, who 'will perform an expiation (*ykpr*) for all the sons of his generation'; the text even seems to refer to Isaiah 53. Unfortunately, the Aramaic fragment contains too many lacunae to allow us to see whether the High Priest sacrificed his own life or atoned in the Temple.[51] These circumstances must make the historian tread very carefully on his path. All we can say is that the tragedies of Euripides are very likely to have contributed to the interpretation of Jesus' death. The available evidence does not allow us to go any further.[52]

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50 *Bacchae*: J. Roux, *Euripide. Les Bacchantes* I, Paris 1970, 72-7. Luke: O. Weinreich, *Religionsgeschichtliche Studien*, Darmstadt 1968, 170-9 (1928[1]); add J. Hackett, Echoes of the *Bacchae* of Euripides in the Acts of the Apostles?, *Irish Theol. Quart.* 23 (1956) 218-27.

51 Cf. E. Puech, Fragments d'un apocryphe de Lévi et le personnage eschatologique. 4QTestLévi$^{c-d}$(?) et 4QAJa, in J. Trebolle Barrera and L. Vegas Montaner (eds.), *The Madrid Qumram Congress. Proc. Int. Congr. on the Dead Sea Scrolls, Madrid 18-21 March 1991* II, Leiden 1992.

52 I am grateful to my friends and colleagues Jan den Boeft, Florentino García Martínez and Jaap Mansfeld for advice, and to Alasdair MacDonald for the correction of my English.

# I gave them laws that were not good

## *Ezekiel 20:25 in Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity*

Pieter Willem van der Horst

One of the many enigmas that the text of the prophet Ezekiel poses is the meaning of Ezek. 20:25, where God says to the prophet that he gave to the people of Israel "laws that were not good and rules by which they could not live". MT reads:
*w[e]gam 'ani natatti lahem ḥuqqim lo' tovim u-mišpatim lo' yiḥyu bahem.*
The LXX does not deviate here from the Hebrew:
καὶ ἐγὼ ἔδωκα αὐτοῖς προστάγματα οὐ καλὰ καὶ δικαιώματα ἐν οἷς οὐ ζήσονται ἐν αὐτοῖς.
The Vulgate, too, has a similar literal rendering:
*ergo et ego dedi eis praecepta non bona et iudicia in quibus non vivent.*
There are no textcritical or grammatical problems here. The only problem is the exegetical-theological question: does the prophet really make God say that he gave his people laws that were not good, whereas some verses earlier he had God make a contrary statement, namely that he had led his people out of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness where "I gave them my laws and showed them my rules, by whose observance man shall live" (20:11)? Let us read what lies between these verses. God continues after v. 11 by saying that in spite of all these blessings Israel rebelled against him and did not walk in his statutes and rejected his rules by which they could have lived. Then God planned to make an end of them in the wilderness, for their heart went after their idols; he swore not to bring them into the promised land; but nonetheless he spared them again. Then God said to them that they should stop defiling themselves with their idols and transgressing his commandments, but they continued

their non-observance of the rules by whose observance man would have life. Still God withheld his hand and prevented himself from venting his anger against his people in the wilderness. But finally, when they persisted in their disobedience, he swore that he would scatter them among the nations and disperse them among the countries, because they had rejected all his laws and transgressed all his ordinances. And therefore he gave them "laws that were not good and rules by which they could not live", and the text goes on: "and I defiled them through their very gifts in making them offer by fire all their first-born, that I might destroy them" (26). Three times (vv. 11, 13, 21) God says that his good laws and statutes were meant to be a way to life, but because Israel had from the beginning consistently refused to live according to them, God had already decided in the wilderness period to exile his people from the promised land and to give them 'not-good' laws that would lead to death instead of life, specifically by having them sacrifice their first-born children by burning them alive.

Although in this contribution we will not focus on the meaning of this passage in itself but rather on its 'Wirkungsgeschichte', some brief comments, based upon the research of others[1], are in order. This extraordinary statement[2] is not as unique as it might seem to be at first sight. "The shocking idea that God misleads those who anger him into sin, for which he then destroys them, already appears in 14:9 ['And if the prophet be deceived and speak a word, I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel']. It is essentially the same as God's hardening of Pharao's heart so that his ruin might be a lasting object lesson

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[1] See, *inter multos alios*, W. Zimmerli, *Ezechiel* (BKAT XIII 1), Neukirchen 1969, 449-450; idem, *Grundriß der alttestamentlichen Theologie*, Stuttgart 1975 (2. Aufl.), 103, 186-187; M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 1-20* (Anchor Bible 22), Garden City 1983, 368-369; M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel*, Oxford 1985, 181-187; G. C. Heider, *The Cult of Molek. A Reassessment*, Sheffield 1985, 369-375; idem, A Further Turn on Ezekiel's Baroque Twist in Ezek. 20:25-26, *JBL* 107 (1988), 721-724.

[2] Zimmerli, *Grundriß* (n. 1) 186: "eine für das AT ganz unerhörte und einmalige Aussage".

(Ex. 9:16; 10:2)"[3]. The second remark concerns the first-born. The law in Ex. 22:28-29 runs as follows: "You shall give me your first-born son; you shall do likewise for your ox and your sheep; seven days he will stay with his mother, (but) on the eighth day you shall give him to me"[4]. This formulation suggests, as Fishbane remarks, that "there is no prima-facie reason not to interpret it as indicating that both first-born human males and their animal counterparts were to be donated to the Lord. (...) Accordingly, there is no *textual* reason for assimilating the interpretation of Exod. 22:28-9 to those articulations of the law where redemption by compensation *is* envisaged and specified"[5]. One might compare the formulation in Ex. 13:1-2, "where all firstlings are required to be donated to YHWH, with no qualification or mitigating circumstance specified"[6]. Now it is clear from several passages in the Pentateuch that, although Ex. 22:28-29 can be read as preserving a law that prescribes the sacrifice of first-born human males to God, this custom did not go uncriticized and unqualified because of its being linked with the cult of Molek (see e.g. Gen. 22, Ex. 13:12-13, 34:19-20, Num. 18:15-18)[7]. "[I]t would appear that successive legal strata have been preserved: an ancient, categorical rule which states that all first-born—humans and animals alike—belong to YHWH; and subsequent qualifications and justifications which permit modes of redemption (...). From this perspective, the unique formulation found in Exod. 22:28-9, which subsumes persons and animals into one undifferentiated cultic-legal category, reflects the older of the two strata just delineated. (...) One may imagine that many Israelites preserved the old custom as an expression of excessive piety *long after* the permission to redeem human first-born had substituted new, divinely sanctioned, procedures"[8].

Passages like Ezek. 16:21 and 23:39 make clear that human first-born were actually sacrificed. The second passage says: "When

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[3] Greenberg (n. 1) 369.

[4] For this translation and criticism of other current translations see Fishbane (n. 1) 181.

[5] *Ibid.* 181.

[6] *Ibid.* 182.

[7] On these and other passages Heider, *Cult of Molek* (n. 1) 232-301.

[8] Fishbane, *ibid.* 183-184.

they had slaughtered their children in sacrifice to their idols, on the same day they came into my sanctuary to profane it". The fact of their visiting YHWH's temple after the sacrifice of children strongly suggests that they regarded this custom as a law of the God of Israel. It is worth quoting Fishbane here again: "Under divine inspiration, Ezekiel himself seems to offer an explanation for what he too undoubtedly perceived as a most puzzling matter. His explanation, in fact, does not stop short of implicating the God of Israel. In Ezek. 20, after a reported divine rebuke of Israel's historical past, when they rebelled against YHWH in the wilderness, YHWH states, through the prophet, that instead of destroying the people there and then he swore to exile them in the future, and, so as to ensure this event, 'I gave them laws which were not good and ordinances by which they could not live; and I polluted them through their [sacral] donations, *when they transmitted/ devoted every first-born*, in order to destroy them' (vv. 25-6)"[9]. And he adds that the law of the human first-born was 'bad' because it was abused or misinterpreted—to the people's doom and the fulfilment of the divine oath, and that this misinterpretation was perhaps simply the result of excessive piety (in which influence from Canaanite practices certainly played a part).

Heider sees in v. 26 "Ezekiel's counterpart to Jeremiah's insistence that child sacrifice was something 'which I did not command, nor did it enter into my mind' (Jer. 7:31; 19:5; 32:35)". He suggests that both prophets' remarks "are in response to the people's claim that Yahweh had, indeed, legislated child sacrifice, which they were offering him in the cult of Molek. (...) Then, in a baroque twist worthy of the prophet, Ezekiel turns the theological tables on the practitioners: very well, Yahweh did give the law they were citing, but it was given so that obedience would not bring life, but would 'devastate' them. If Israel would not obey God's good laws for life, they would obey his bad laws for death, but they *would* obey"[10].

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9 *Ibid.* 185. Heider, *Cult of Molek* (n. 1) 370, here refers to the notion of a 'demonic' side to YHWH, on which see the older but still valuable study by P. Volz, *Das Dämonische in Jahwe*, Tübingen 1924.

10 Heider, *Cult* (n. 1) 372. On the link of Ez. 20:25-26 with the hardening of Pharao's heart and the death of the Egyptian first-born see Heider, A

So much for modern research on this remarkable passage in Ezekiel. The decisive difference, as we will see, between modern and ancient exegesis is that the modern biblical scholar tries to place the passage concerned into its historical and literary context and to explain it from that setting, whereas both ancient Jewish and early Christian exegesis are most often characterized by a decontextualizing (and atomizing) approach in which the historical setting plays no role, but which enables the 'exegete' to actualize the text. The awareness of the practice of Israelite child sacrifice as part of the background of our passage will not be found in any of the writings that deal with it.

To be sure, it is a long way before we find the first reference to Ezek. 20:25 in post-biblical Jewish sources. One looks in vain for it in all of the Jewish Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha, nor does one find any reference or allusion to, let alone quotation of, our text in Philo[11] or Josephus or any of the other Jewish-Greek authors[12]. In the Qumran scrolls our text is never quoted or even alluded to[13]. In Tannaitic literature no trace of our text is to be found. It is only in the 3rd through 6th centuries that we find rabbis discussing the meaning of this passage. What could be the background of this long silence? It could be sheer coincidence, but there are several factors that prevent us from resorting to this easy solution.

It is not only the fact that our text, especially when looked at in isolation from its historical background, was really embarrassing for the Jewish religious community that played a role here. There was also a more general reason that makes up for the relatively scarce use of Ezekiel in ancient Jewish writings. Of course, we do find many references to Ezek. 1 and 10 in the apocalyptic and esoteric writings[14]; and we also find some other traces of Ezekielian

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Further Twist ... (n. 1).

11 Remarkably enough, Philo's only quotations from Ezekiel all are from ch. 44! See *Biblia Patristica, Supplément*, Paris 1982, 89.

12 There are also no quotations or allusions in pagan authors, as can now conveniently be checked in the comprehensive survey by G. Rinaldi, *Biblia gentium*, Rome 1989.

13 I am indebted to Dr. F. García Martínez for help in finding this out.

14 See Chr. Rowland, *The Influence of the First Chapter of Ezekiel on Judaism and Christianity*, unpubl. diss. Cambridge 1975; idem, *The Open Heaven. A Study of Apocalyptic in Judaism and Early Christianity*, London 1982.

language and imagery in early Jewish writings, but on the whole the harvest is very meager[15]. The main reason for this reserved attitude most probably was that the book of Ezekiel as a whole was in some sense regarded as dangerous and hence looked upon with a certain distrust. It is not difficult to see the motives for this suspicion. First and foremost, there were the negative criticisms and often very vehement denunciations of the people of Israel in the prophet's book. Chapter 20 is only one example of the incisive and mordant way of vilifying the way of life of the people. Second, there was the very serious problem of the divergences between the Torah of Moses and some statements in Ezekiel. The best known instance is of course the contradiction in the idea of personal responsibility between Ex. 20:5 and 34:7 on the one hand and Ezek. 18:3-4 on the other. But this was not the only one. In the Babylonian Talmud, *Menahot* 45a, we find a whole series of *halakhot* from both the Torah and Ezekiel which contradict one another; in some cases the rabbis succeeded in solving the contradictions, in others they said, "This passage will be interpreted by Elijah in the future", which means that they were unable to reconcile the verse with the rule of the Torah and that it would have to be explained by the herald of the messianic era. It was the first century scholar Hananiah ben Hezekiah who did his utmost to reconcile Ezekiel with Moses so as to prevent Ezekiel from being excluded from the canon, something in which he succeeded only with great difficulty (see Bavli *Shabbath* 13b and *Chagigah* 13a)[16]. Third, and related to this, was the problem that Ezekiel's description of the future temple did not agree with the rules laid down by God for the building of his sanctuary in the Torah. Fourth, there was the fact that speculation about the divine chariot (*merkavah*) in the vision of Ezekiel ch. 1 had led to dangerous heresies in some esoteric circles, the most serious of which was the doctrine of 'two powers in heaven' (*šte rešuyot*

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15 On this see especially E. Dassmann, Hesekiel, *Reallexikon für Antike und Christentum* 14 (1988) 1133-1149 (1132-1191).

16 See Dassmann, Hesekiel 1133-44; also M. Greenberg and M. Aberbach in *Encyclopaedia Judaica* 6 (1972) 1094-96. In *Shabbath* 13b Rav Judah says: "In truth that man, Hananiah son of Hezekiah by name, is to be remembered for blessing; but for him, the Book of Ezekiel would have been hidden [i.e., excluded from the Canon], for its words contradict the Torah".

*bašamayim*)[17], which threatened the heart of the Jewish faith, sc. monotheism. And finally—but this is somewhat speculative—the embarrassing text under discussion, which attributes to God the giving of evil laws to his own people, may have been a reason to avoid mentioning the book, the more so since this passage was exploited by the Church Fathers in an anti-Jewish sense, as we shall presently see[18]. Taking all this into account, it is no wonder that in rabbinic literature one can find several critical or condescending remarks about our prophet[19]. And in view of the very modest Ezekiel-reception in non-rabbinic literature, one may assume that this reserved attitude was not limited to rabbinic circles. On the whole there must have been in ancient Judaism at least mixed feelings about this prophet.

Be that as it may, when we find a discussion of Ezek. 20:25 in rabbinic literature, we see that the most disturbing aspect of this verse was played down. But let us first have a look at the targum to Ezekiel, not because it is the earliest text, since it is hard to date[20], but since, being a 'translation', it falls somewhat outside the framework of the regular rabbinic literature, and also since it illustrates so nicely the problems our biblical verse created to the ancient Jews. I quote the targum to 20:25 in Levey's translation[21]: "So, too, since they had rebelled against my Memra and did not wish to listen to my prophets, I removed them and delivered them into the hand of their enemies; they followed their stupid inclination and they obeyed religious decrees which were not proper and laws by which they could not survive". Levey translates the text as found in the Rabbinic Bibles, but the edition by A. Sperber

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17 See A. F. Segal, *Two Powers in Heaven. Early Rabbinic Reports about Christianity and Gnosticism*, Leiden 1977.

18 A comparable case is the embarrassing episode of the golden calf, which is deliberately omitted by Josephus, which caused the rabbis many problems and was exploited by the Church Fathers; see L. Smolar & M. Aberbach, The Golden Calf Episode in Postbiblical Literature, *Hebrew Union College Annual* 39 (1968) 91-116.

19 Examples are quoted by Aberbach in *Enc. Jud.* 6, 1095.

20 S. H. Levey, *The Targum of Ezekiel* (The Aramaic Bible 13), Edinburgh 1987, 2, dates its final redaction to the tenth century but assumes much older strata.

21 *Ibid.* 63.

reads[22]: "I delivered them into the power [hands] of their stupid inclinations, they went and made [rather than 'obeyed', *'avadu*] decrees etc. ...". Whatever reading one follows, it is clear that in both cases God is discharged from responsibility for having given 'not-good laws' to the people. In a note Levey remarks: "Tg.'s rendering of this verse makes God responsible for retaliating against them by delivering them to their enemies, whose unworthy laws they were compelled to obey, all because they would not obey God's laws. MT is theologically unacceptable to Tg."[23] This is correct, but the element of unburdening God should receive extra emphasis here.

When we now turn to rabbinic literature in the proper sense, we find very different solutions to the problem. Our earliest evidence is a passage in Talmud Yerushalmi, *Eruvin* III 9, 21c-22a. It is a difficult passage[24], which takes its point of departure in Song of Songs 1:6: "'My mother's sons were angry with me, they made me keeper of the vineyards, but my own vineyard I have not kept'. R. Ba and R. Hiyya in the name of R. Yohanan: What made me guard the vineyards? It is because of not keeping my own vineyard. What made me keep two festival days in Syria? It is because I did not keep one proper festival in the Holy Land. I imagined that I would receive a reward for the two days, but I received a reward only for one of them. What made it necessary that I should have to separate two pieces of dough-offering from grain grown in Syria? It is because I did not separate a single piece of dough-offering in the Land of Israel. I thought that I might receive a reward for two, but I received a reward only for one. R. Yohanan cited the following verse in their regard: 'Moreover, I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances

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22 A. Sperber, *The Bible in Aramaic, III: The Latter Prophets according to Targum Jonathan*, Leiden 1992 (= 1962), 307.

23 Levey 63 n.10. It should be added that Targum Jonathan renders the terms *ḥuqqim* and *mišpatim*, when they refer to laws and ordinances of God, by *q$^{e}$yamaya'* and *dinin*, but when they refer to pagan rules and statutes, by *g$^{e}$ziran* and *nimusin*, which is the case here; see L. Smolar & M. Aberbach, *Studies in Targum Jonathan to the Prophets*, New York and Baltimore 1983, 40 with n. 232.

24 I owe thanks to Dr. Joanna Weinberg (Leo Baeck College, London) for help with the interpretation of this difficult text.

by which they could not have life' (Ez. 20:25)"[25]. The occurrence of the plural 'vineyards' in "they made me keeper of the vineyards" alongside the singular in "I have not kept my own vineyard" (Song of Songs 1:6) is the occasion for a question concerning the keeping of two festival days and the separating of two pieces of *hallah* in Syria over against one day and one *hallah* in Israel. In the diaspora an extra day is added to each of the biblical festival days (except for Yom Kippur)[26] because of the uncertainty in the diaspora about the day on which the New Moon was announced. Also, two pieces of *hallah* had to be separated in Syria (here for: the diaspora)[27], one for the priest (biblical) and one to be burnt because Syria is to be regarded as unclean (non-biblical, see Mishna, *Hallah* IV 8). These are post-biblical, rabbinic rules, based upon a certain conception of the difference between living in the Land of Israel and living outside it. Now our Yerushalmi text says that keeping the extra festival day and separating the extra dough-offering does not yield an extra reward; so these rabbinic rulings are not very rewarding. It is as if "my mother's sons were angry with me", i.e. our rabbis seem to punish us for not living in Israel (for 'not keeping my own vineyard'). These rules are therefore to be regarded as Ezekiel's 'laws that are not good', in the sense of 'laws that are *not rewarding*'. What we see here is that the alarming text of Ezekiel is tamed by making it refer to rabbinic rules that are not really rewarding for the people that keep them in the diaspora.

We find almost the same passage (again in the name of R. Johanan) in *Pesiqta de Rav Kahana* XIV 4 (ed. B. Mandelbaum, p. 244), also from about the 5th cent.[28], where the most recent translators freely but aptly render the biblical verse by "Therefore I gave them also statutes that were not *rewarding*"[29]. And in the

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[25] Transl. by J. Neusner, *The Talmud of the Land of Israel, vol. 12: Erubin*, Chicago–London 1991, 122.

[26] This extra day is called *yom tov sheni shel galuyyot*; see the Editor in *Enc. Jud.* 6 (1972) 1244.

[27] On the uncertainty of the status of Syria—does it or does it not belong to the Land of Israel?—see K. Albrecht, *Challa* (Die Mischna I 9), Gießen 1913, 34-36. Cf. m. *Ma'as.* V 5.

[28] See H. L. Strack–G. Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch*, München 1982, 273.

[29] W. G. Braude & I. J. Kapstein, *Pesikta de-Rab Kahana*, London 1975, 270:

perhaps slightly later midrash *Shir ha-Shirim Rabba* I 6,5 we read: "R. Ba said in the name of R. Johanan: The community of Israel said before the Holy One, blessed be He: Because I did not keep one day of the festivals properly in the Land of Israel, behold, I keep two days in the diaspora. I thought I should receive reward for two, but I only receive reward for one. R. Johanan applied to them the verse, 'Therefore I gave them also statutes that were not good'". We can observe here that R. Yohanan's explanation of Ez. 20:25 in terms of non-rewarding rabbinic halakhah had gained support. No doubt it was a relief to be able to exploit such an unburdening exegesis in the face of the anti-Jewish Christian exegesis of the same text.

When we now direct our attention to the Babylonian Talmud, we see a different picture. That is to say, the underlying motive remains the same, namely avoiding the implication that God gave Israel laws that were not good, but the reasoning is more sophisticated. In *Berakhot* 24b we read a long discussion about reciting *Tefillah* (i.e. the *Shemone Esreh* prayer), in which *inter alia* the question is raised under which circumstances a person should not recite the *Tefillah* at the prescribed time: when are the limits of respect being broken? For instance, what should a man do when he is lying in his bed together with his wife at the moment it is time to recite the*Tefillah*? Is it allowed to recite the *Tefillah* when one feels the need for belching or yawning or spitting? Can a person go on reciting the *Tefillah* when he has to break wind? One scholar says: When a man is standing saying the *Tefillah* and he breaks wind, he has to wait till the smell has passed off and then he begins to pray again. Others say: If he stands saying the *Tefillah* and he wants to break wind, he steps back four cubits and breaks wind, waits till the wind has gone, and resumes his prayer, saying: "Sovereign of the Universe, Thou hast formed us with various hollows and various vents. Well dost Thou know our

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"What forced me in Syria to observe two days of the festivals? The fact that in Israel I had not observed the festival for the one day it was ordained to be observed on. When I was made to observe the two, I supposed that I would receive reward for both, but it was only for one that I received reward. [Of such enforced observances outside the Land] R. Johanan cited the verse, 'Therefore I gave them also statutes that were *not rewarding*'" (italics mine).

shame and confusion and that our latter end is worms and confusions"; and he begins again from the place where he stopped. Also the question is raised whether a man who is walking in a dirty alley or is at a rubbish dump can go on reciting the *Tefillah*. Some say that he may do so only if he puts his hand over his mouth; others say that one has to stop altogether in such a situation: "Suppose he does not stop, what happens? R. Meyasha the grandson of R. Joshua ben Levi said: Of him Scripture says, 'Therefore I gave them also statutes that were not good and ordinances whereby they could not live'". Here again we see that the text of Ezekiel is applied to a situation in which the responsibility for the 'laws that were not good' is removed from God and transferred to some of the rabbis. It is again a rather innocent accusation that they get to hear: they have decreed that one should not recite the most important prayer when being in a place with a bad smell, but this is a situation that can hardly be avoided, so it is wellnigh impossible to live by such a rule: in that sense it is 'not good'!

The second passage in the Bavli, *Megillah* 32a, deals with the ways in which Scripture should be read and Mishna should be recited in synagogue services: "R. Shefatiah said in the name of R. Johanan: If one reads the Scripture without a melody or repeats the Mishnah without a tune, of him the Scripture says: 'Moreover I gave them statutes that were not good, etc.'[30]. Abaye strongly demurred at this, saying: Because he cannot sing agreeably, are you to apply to him the verse, 'ordinances by which they cannot live'? No, this verse is to be applied as by R. Mesharshia, who said: If two scholars live in the same town and do not treat one another's halachic pronouncements respectfully, of them the verse says, 'I gave them statutes that were not good and ordinances by which they cannot live'". Here we see again a different application of our biblical text: Shefatiah says that Scripture should be read in a cantillating way, probably because an accompanying melody enlivens one's studies and endears the laws which one

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30 H. L. Strack–P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch* IV 1, München 1928, 161, translate the biblical quotation as follows: "Habe auch ich ihnen Satzungen gegeben, die nicht schön (klingen)?" and they remark: "Der Vers scheint als Fragesatz gefasst zu sein".

learns. If such are described as 'not good', it is because the melody is lacking. Here we see again a typical form of decontextualizing exegesis: the historical and literary setting is again completely ignored, which enables the exposer to apply the verse to statutes which in themselves are good but which are made into 'not-good laws' by reciting them without an accompanying melody. In a later extra-talmudic treatise, *Massekhet Sopherim* III 10, we find exactly the same explanation, but this time without the second half with Abaye's protest. For the Bavli text goes on by saying that Abaye objected that it is untenable to apply to a man who cannot sing well when reading Scripture the verse about the ordinances by which one cannot live. He rejects this interpretation in favour of another one, by Mesharshia, who said that if two scholars treat one another's halakhic decisions disrespectfully, that verse applies to them. That is to say, it is these scholars themselves who make their own halakhot into 'laws that are not good' by treating those of another sage without respect.

We move into the early Middle Ages when we finally take a glance at *Shemoth Rabbah*[31]. The whole of ch. 30 is a long midrash on Ex. 21:1, "Now these are the ordinances that you shall set before them". In this discussion it is remarked that the heathen also have their judges but that these neither study the Torah nor fulfil it, as it says, 'Therefore I gave them also statutes that were not good and ordinances whereby they should not live' (Ez. 20:25), but with regard to the commandments it says, 'By doing them a man shall live' (Lev. 18:5). Here we see a definitive separation of the laws that are not good from those of the people of Israel: it is the ordinances of the gentiles that are not good and they are what the prophet spoke about. The proof is a verse in Lev. 18 in which it is said concerning God's commandments that by doing them a man shall live, and this can never refer to the same commandments as those meant by the prophet: those were pagan statutes!

It is fascinating to see how in a continuous process of reinterpretation the rabbis have tried to make sense of an alarming biblical text they could no longer understand because they did not

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31 For its date see Strack-Stemberger, *Einleitung* 285.

have the means to establish its original meaning. Although the differences in relation to the Christian interpretation of the same text are vast, we will now see that it was exactly the same lack of historical consciousness that made the Church Fathers explain the text in the way they did[32].

To begin with, it should be noted that our text does not play any role in the New Testament[33]. This is remarkable, for one might have expected that at least writers like Paul or John would have loved it to adduce this text as a heavy weapon to be directed against their opponents in their polemics concerning the law. In the exegetical climate of the day it would have made sense to make use of this text in an antinomian way. But they did not do that, and we can only guess at the reasons for that. Perhaps, being Jews, they were hindered in doing so by the same anti-Ezekiel atmosphere that was fostered in some Jewish circles in the early post-biblical period, as we have seen above.

Be that as it may, the first striking element in the comparison of the Jewish and the Christian *Wirkungsgeschichte* of Ezek. 20:25 is that in spite of the silence in the NT we do not need to wait very long for the first references to our text in Christian writings. For already in the early second half of the 2nd century we find the text used by Justin Martyr in his *Dialogus cum Tryphone Judaeo* 21:4. In ch. 18 Justin told his Jewish conversation partner that Christians would have been willing to keep the OT commandments if they would not have known *why* these have been imposed upon Israel. But, Justin says (ch. 19-20), Christians do have the insight that God gave many commandments to Israel *solely because of their iniquities*. God gave them his laws not because Israel is God's chosen people but because this people abandoned God continuously. Therefore, the laws are meant as a punishment. In ch. 21:4 Justin then extensively quotes the whole of Ezek. 20:19-26. In ch. 22 Justin repeats that it is because of their sins that Israel

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[32] For a general survey of the reception-history of Ezekiel in early Christianity see Dassmann in *RAC* 14, 1151-1183. In the present study I confine myself to the most interesting passages from ecclesiastical writers between the middle of the second and the middle of the fifth century CE.

[33] See the index of 'loci citati vel allegati' in Nestle–Aland[26], 764.

received the laws, which is followed by a very long quotation from Amos 5:18–6:7, a passage that is supposed to prove that point. It is clear that Ezek. 20:25 functions here in a context in which it is proved from the OT that God punishes his people with commandments. 'Laws that are not good' obviously fit very well in such a context. This paradigmatic statement reminds us of the fact that "the conflict between the early Church and the Synagogue centered primarily on the validity of the covenant between God and the ancient Israelites. The Church claimed (...) that the covenant had been abrogated at the very moment of its inception by the treacherous act of the Israelites who had rejected the proffered bond of God by their making and adoring the golden calf".[34] The golden calf episode is not explicitly mentioned here but it is in the background, as is apparent from Justin's quotation of Exod. 32:6 in *Dial.* 20:1. The golden calf episode will be explicitly referred to very soon. As a matter of fact, already in the early decades of the 2nd century the author of the *Epistle of Barnabas* states that God's covenant with Israel was broken at the time of the Worship of the golden calf (4:8) and that the Lord gave to the Church the covenant which Israel had proved not to be worthy to receive, on account of their sin with the golden calf (14:1-4)[35]. A connection with Ez. 20:25 is not yet found here.

It is found some decades later in Irenaeus. In his *Adversus Haereses* IV 15,1 he says that at first God deemed it sufficient to warn mankind by *naturalia praecepta*, which he implanted in the hearts of men and which are written in the Decalogue. It was only after the heinous sin with the golden calf, which was a spiritual return into Egypt [Acts 7:39], that Israel received all the

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[34] Smolar & Aberbach, The Golden Calf Episode (n. 18) 91.

[35] However seriously the rabbis took Israel's sin in Exod. 32, they never interpreted the golden calf episode to mean that the covenant was broken for good; see also I. J. Mandelbaum, Tannaitic Exegesis of the Golden Calf Episode, in P. R. Davies and R. T. White (eds.), *A Tribute to Geza Vermes. Essays on Jewish and Christian Literature and History*, Sheffield 1990, 207-223 (see e.g. *ibid.* 211-213: they do portray the sin of the calf as the most significant transgression of Israel that costs them certain gifts of God, for instance immortality, but there is forgiveness; *Mekhilta Baḥodesh* 2 and 9, et al.). Cf. also P. C. Bori, *The Golden Calf and the Origins of the Anti-Jewish Controversy*, Atlanta 1990.

other commandments, which were meant to reduce them to slavery. God's commandments are an intentional punishment for the sins of his people, as is proved by the quotation of Ezek. 20:25 and a very long quote from Acts 7:38-43 (Stephen's speech). We may notice here that part of the passage from Amos 5 quoted by Justin was already cited in Acts 7 (Amos 5:25-6 in Acts 7:42-3), and that the speech of Stephen again plays a role in the interpretation of Ez. 20:25 in John Chrysostom, as we shall soon see.

We move into the early third century with the next testimony, i.e. the *Didascalia apostolorum*. There we have a more sophisticated argument, which is based upon the anonymous author's theory of the so-called Second Legislation. In ch. 26 we read[36]: "The Lord gave both the Law and the Second Legislation. The Law has to be kept by all people, as it is said by God himself: 'his delight is in the Law of the Lord and on his Law he meditates day and night' [Ps. 1:2]. But the Second Legislation was a bond and a blindness. (...) In the Gospel He affirms the Law, and calls and brings us out from the (bonds of the) Second Legislation. That the Law is other than the Second Legislation, in David He likewise shows by a distinction, speaking thus: 'Let us sever their cords and loose their yoke from us' [Ps. 2:3]. The Holy Spirit (...) says that the Law is a 'yoke', but the Second Legislation 'cords'. (...) When the people served idols, there was added to them the weight of the Second Legislation. (...) But the Church has not been bound. For to Ezekiel He explains and makes known that the Law of life is one, but the Second Law, of death, is another; He spoke thus: 'But I acted for the sake of my name, that it should not be profaned in the sight of the nations among whom they dwelt, in whose sight I made myself known to them in bringing out of the land of Egypt. So I led them out of the land of Egypt and brought them into the wilderness. I gave them my statutes and showed them my ordinances, by whose observance man shall live' [Ez. 20:9-11]. But afterwards,

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[36] R. H. Connolly, *Didascalia apostolorum. The Syriac Version ... translated*, Oxford 1929, 228-230. See also the translation in H. Achelis & J. Flemming, *Die syrische Didaskalia übersetzt und erklärt*, Leipzig 1904. The original Greek text has been lost but a heavily edited version of it appears in the first six books of the *Constitutiones Apostolicae* (middle of the 5th century).

upbraiding them because they had sinned and had not kept the Law of life, He repeats to them and says thus: 'I gave them judgements that are not good and ordinances by which they could not live' [Ez. 20:25] (...) It is the Second Legislation that He called 'judgements that are not good'. (...) The Second Legislation was imposed for nothing else but for idolatry."

Some comments are in order here[37]. Right at the outset of his treatise the author of the *Didascalia* states as his central message that "our Saviour came for no other cause but to fulfil the Law and to set us loose from the bonds of the Second Legislation" (I 7, p. 14 Connolly). So the abolition of the Second Legislation was one of the main purposes of Christ's coming. But what exactly is this Second Legislation? God gave his people a good law. That is first of all the Ten Commandments, and thereby he made known the name of Jesus, for 'ten' = 'yod' and the yod is the first letter of the name of Jesus. The good law consists further of the 'ordinances' (see Ex. 21:1). Obedience to this law is stressed not only in the Psalms and the Prophets but also by Jesus himself. This law, which is no burden, was given by God before the people fell into idolatry by worshipping the golden calf (Exod. 32). There is nothing in it about distinction of different kinds of meat, about sacrifices or other offerings, for God has no need of sacrifices. Then "the account of Exodus 32 is exploited to the full in support of his argument that God in his wrath, yet also as a sign of his loving-kindness and mercy, bound them with the Second Legislation consisting of heavy burdens and direct commandments too numerous to mention"[38]. Because the Jews failed to keep these commandments, they were struck with an ever growing blindness. (The author purposely overlooks the fact that the biblical story in Ex. 32-34 also relates a dramatic rehabilitation of the people by God, who forgives them their sin with the calf, which sheds a completely different light on the second set of

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[37] For this paragraph I rely upon W. C. van Unnik, The Significance of Moses' Law for the Church of Christ According to the Syriac Didascalia, in his *Sparsa Collecta* III, Leiden 1983, 7-39 (translated from the Dutch original in *Nederlands Archief voor Kerkgeschiedenis* 31 [1940] 65-100); see also M. Simon, *Verus Israel. A study of the relations between Christians and Jews in the Roman Empire (AD 135-425)*, Oxford 1986, 87-90.

[38] Van Unnik, Significance 13.

tablets![39]). For Christians this Second Legislation, which was a punishment for idolatry, is no longer valid because they were set free from idolatry by baptism. The coming of Christ totally destroyed the Second Legislation. Whoever follows the Second Legislation unites himself with the idolaters and thereby makes himself an enemy of God. In the long chapter 26 the author tries to demonstrate that also for a variety of practical and ethical reasons it would be foolish to observe the commandments of the Second Legislation; their inferiority is all too obvious, he claims, and they are now replaced by prayers and thanksgivings. By stressing the inferior and temporary nature of the Second Legislation the author tries to take the wind out of the sails of those Jewish Christians who maintained that observance of all Old Testament commandments was according to God's will. So we see here a similar reasoning as in Justin and Irenaeus to the effect that it is Israel's sins that brought upon them as a punishment the 'laws that are not good', the sins now being specified by Irenaeus and the Didascalia as the golden calf episode, which lent itself very well to this purpose because the biblical text itself mentions the giving of a second set of tables (Exod. 34:1ff.)[40].

Origen is our next witness. In a passage in *Contra Celsum* VII 18 he has a long quotation from the *Alêthês Logos*, which shows how Celsus plays off Moses and Jesus against each other: "The man of Nazareth gives contradictory laws [namely in contradiction to those of Moses]. (...) Who is wrong, Moses or Jesus? Or when the Father sent Jesus, had he forgotten what commands he gave to Moses? Or did he condemn his own laws and change his mind, and send his messenger for quite the opposite purpose?" In response Origen says that Celsus "has fallen into a very vulgar error concerning the meaning of the Bible: He thinks that in the Law and the Prophets there is no deeper doctrine beyond that of the literal meaning of the words". In §§ 18-19 Origen tries to demonstrate that such an opinion can only lead to absurdities. In

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[39] This point is well made by Simon, *Verus Israel* 88.

[40] The same argument is also found in Aphrahat, *Demonstratio* 15:7. Note that already Stephen in Acts 7 singles out the golden calf episode as "the fountainhead of the crimes committed by the Jews throughout their history", thus Smolar & Aberbach, The Golden Calf Episode (n. 18) 98.

§20 he says: "We maintain that the Law has a twofold interpretation, one literal and the other spiritual, as was also taught by some of our predecessors. And it is not so much we as God, speaking in one of the prophets, who described the law literally understood as "judgements that are not good" and "statutes that are not good" [Ez. 20:25]; and in the same prophet God is represented as saying that the Law spiritually understood is "judgements that are good" and "statutes that are good" [cf. Ez. 20:11.13.21]. The prophet is obviously not making contradictory statements in the same passage. It is consistent with this when Paul also says that "the letter kills", which is equivalent to the literal interpretation, whereas "the spirit gives life" [2 Cor. 3:6], which means the same as the spiritual interpretation. In fact one can find in Paul something analogous to the statements in the prophet which Celsus would suppose to be contradictions. In one sentence Ezekiel says, "I gave them judgements that were not good and statutes that were not good, by which they will not live" [20:25]; but in another, "I gave them judgements that were good and statutes that were good, by which they will live" [cf. 20:11], or at least words to the same effect as these. So also Paul, in one place where he wants to attack the literal interpretation of the Law, says, "If the ministration of death written and engraved upon stones came with glory, so that the children of Israel could not look steadfastly on the face of Moses because of the glory of his face, which glory was to pass away, how shall not the ministration of the Spirit be even more glorious?" [2 Cor. 3:7-8] But in another place he admires and approves of the Law and calls it spiritual, saying, "And we know that the law is spiritual" [Rom. 7:14], and he speaks of it in terms of approval in the words, "So the Law is holy, and the commandment holy and righteous and good" [Rom. 7:12]"[41]. Here we see for the first time the element that it is the kind of interpretation that makes a law or rule 'good' or 'not-good': a literal interpretation makes a law into a 'letter that kills', a spiritual one into a 'commandment that is holy and righteous and good'.

Origen quotes our text again in *Selecta in Leviticum*, when

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[41] Translation by H. Chadwick, *Origen, Contra Celsum*, Cambridge 1965, 409-411 (slightly modified).

dealing with Lev. 4:27[42]: "From the same (writing): 'If a soul sins unwittingly by neglecting some of all the commandments of the Lord' [a free rendering of Lev. 4:27]: this is natural, for possibly there are some statutes of the Lord which one should not observe, in accordance with (the verse) 'I gave them statutes which are not good'. Now a soul sins unwittingly when with the motive of piety it observes what it should not, and then it needs a sacrifice for forgiveness; whereas one who does so on purpose does not need a sacrifice, for example, the one who became a Jew in order to win Jews, and who circumcised Timothy [1 Cor. 9:20 and Acts 16:3]". Note that Origen here exploits the fact that the text of Lev. 4:27 speaks of unwittingly neglecting some of *all* (πασῶν) the commandments: there may be *some* (τινά) that are not good. The sheer fact that the Law does not at all prescribe a severe punishment for not doing *all* the commandments is a clear indication, says Origen, that at least *some* of them belong to the category of 'laws that are not good'.

In his *Homiliae in Exodum* VII 2[43] Origen exposes Ex. 15:25-26 ('There the Lord made for them a statute and an ordinance and there he proved them, saying: If you will diligently hearken to the voice of the Lord your God, and do that which is right in his eyes, and give heed to his commandments, and keep all his statutes, I will put none of the diseases upon you which I put upon the Egyptians') : "God gave Israel laws which were to lead them to life if they would obey them, but to destruction if they would not. For that reason God put them to the test. Hence he said: 'I gave them statutes which are not good'. Because Israel did not keep to the commandments, "the very commandment which promised life proved to be death" (Rom. 7:10). So one and the same commandment leads to life when kept and to destruction if not kept. Because it leads to destruction for those who do not keep it, Scripture speaks about 'commandments which are not good and by which they cannot live'". Origen here displays again a new interpretation: A good law may turn into a not-good law by being disobeyed, because in that case it leads to death instead of life.

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[42] PG 12, 400. The same text also in *Fragmenta e catenis in Lev.*, PG 17, 17, also *ad* 4:27.

[43] Edited by M. Borret in *Sources Chrétiennes* 321, Paris 1985, 210.

In the *Selecta in Ezechielem* Origen comments upon Ez. 20:25 as follows[44]: "'And I gave them statutes which are not good': What were those statutes other than the letter of the Law that kills [2 Cor. 3:6] and the covenant of death that has been engraved with letters of stone [2 Cor. 3:7] and the dispensation of condemnation [2 Cor. 3:9]? For both are ordained by one and the same voice: the letter and the Spirit. But the statutes according to the letter one should not keep; those according to the Spirit, however, one should keep. For such a thing is irreproachable [blameless?], since some of the statutes defile a person, as we learn not only from the Apostle of the New Testament but it is also clear from those who lived before the coming of the Saviour. Take for example the fact that the priests who desecrate the sabbath (by their work) in the temple are innocent, or that one may be circumcised on the sabbath: one law is kept while the other is being broken. And take the fact that David and his companions ate from the shewbreads, which neither he nor his companions were allowed to eat, but only the priests [1 Sam. 21:1-6 and Mt. 12:4 parr.], and that images of the cherubim were put in the tent of the testimony as well as in the temple [Ex. 25:18 and 1 Kings 6:23-28], and that Moses made an image of the bronze serpent [Num. 21:8-9]". Here Origen returns to the interpretation we already met in *Contra Celsum* VII 18ff., namely that whether or not a law is good depends upon the way it is interpreted, spiritually or literally.

Probably also deriving from Origen is a passage in Eusebius' *Commentarii in Psalmos* (*ad* Ps. 2:3)[45]: "'Let us burst their bonds asunder and cast their yoke from us' [Ps. 2:3]. The people, who are literally under the yoke of the law, which he teaches them to despise as it contains 'judgements which are not good and statutes which are not good', are led by Christ to the spiritual law which does have good judgements and good statutes, and so they put off the heavy yoke of the letter that kills". It is striking and again typical of a decontextualized exegesis that words that in the psalm are spoken by the kings who are God's enemies are here interpreted as words of Christ! This is reminiscent of the use of this same verse by the author of the *Didascalia*, who said that these

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44 PG 13, 820.

45 PG 23, 84; see J. B. Pitra, *Analecta Sacra* III, Venice 1883, *ad loc.*

words were uttered by the Holy Spirit, but the difference is that the *Didascalia* has the psalm-verse make a distinction between the yoke which is the Law, which is still valid, and the bonds which are the Second Legislation, that is the 'not-good laws' that have now been abolished, whereas Eusebius/Origen makes the whole verse refer to the laws that are not good.

Our final witness from the 4th century is John Chrysostom[46]. In his *Expositio in Ps. 43* [47] Ezek. 20:25 is cited as a culmination at the end of a long series of OT quotations which should prove that God never meant his laws to be taken literally, but gave them only to meet the *astheneia* of his people. He compares this to the *condescensio* (συγκατάβασις) of Christ who sometimes healed people by touching them whereas actually a single word would have sufficed. The series of texts he quotes is as follows: Is. 1:12; Jer. 11:15; Amos 5:25; Jer. 6:20; Ps. 39:7; 1 Sam. 15:22 (first half); Ps. 50:18; 1 Sam. 15:22 (second half); Amos 5:21 and 23; Is. 1:13-14; Is. 58:5; Ezek. 20:25.

In his *Homiliae in Epistulam I ad Cor.*, John Chrysostom says the following[48]: (In good times the Israelites always slid back to godlessness [ἀσέβεια]) "What did God do thereafter? He imposed a multitude of laws upon them, thereby hindering their license. Now you should know that these laws do not contribute in any way to a virtuous life, but they were given them as a kind of rein, providing them with a sort of business. Now listen to what the prophet says about them: 'I gave them laws that are not good'. What does that mean: 'not good'? It means all that does not contribute to virtue. For that reason he adds: 'judgements by which they cannot live'. The 'unspiritual [ψυχικός] man does not receive the gifts of the Spirit of God' [1 Cor. 2:14]". This is the old theory about the 'not-good laws' being given as a punishment for idolatry.

In his *Hom. in Acta Apost.* XVII (ad 7:35, in Stephen's speech)[49] Chrysostom speaks about Israel's resistance against Moses as if

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[46] The 4th cent. Latin Church Fathers seem to be rather silent about Ez. 20:25.

[47] PG 55, 174.

[48] PG 61, 61.

[49] PG 60, 136.

against Christ (Acts 7:35-36). Moses said that the Lord would raise a prophet like him (Deut. 18:15), and that is what Christ referred to when he said that salvation is from the Jews (John 4:22), thereby meaning himself. Moses received 'living oracles' in order to give them to us (Acts 7:38). "What are 'living oracles' [λόγια ζῶντα]? Either those whose outcome is indicated by words, or he [Stephen] means prophecies. Then comes the accusation against the forefathers that, after the signs and miracles and after they had received 'living oracles', they did not want to obey, he says. Rightly he calls them 'living oracles' for that indicates that there are also 'non-living' ones. Thereof Ezekiel speaks, for example when he says, 'I gave them commandments that are not good'. With such commandments in mind he [Stephen] says 'living', 'but they rejected them and returned in their hearts to Egypt' (Acts 7:30)". Here we see again that the speech by Stephen with its Torah-critical tendency is taken into service for the explanation of Ez. 20:25, as in Irenaeus, even though the text of Acts 7 itself does not even hint at our passage (although it does at Amos 5).

Finally, from the second and third decades of the 5th century we have two commentaries on Ezekiel that do not follow the traditional paths of Christian exegesis that we have seen so far, those by Jerome and by Theodoret of Cyrrhus. These are the first full-scale commentaries on the prophet that have been preserved in their entirety (those by Origen and Victorinus of Pettau are lost). In his *Commentarii in Hiezechielem* VI (*ad* 20:25) Jerome writes (after having quoted Ez. 20:21-26)[50]: "In various periods they [sc. the people of Israel] were handed over to nations and kings because of their many sins, and it is in such circumstances that the precepts of the Lord, which by their very nature are good, and also the judgements by which they could live when they would believe in them, were made into ones that were not good for them, because in their situation of exile (or: captivity) they could in no way keep the precepts of the law nor do what God's word had commanded them to do. The text does not say: God gave them 'bad' precepts, but: 'not good'; it does not immediately follow that

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50 Ed. by F. Glorie in CCL 75, Turnhout 1964, 265.

what is not good, is bad, as also the apostle teaches us [in 1 Cor. 7:1-2 combined with 1 Thess. 4:4]: 'It is good for a man not to touch his wife or a woman[51] but because of the temptation each one should possess his vessel in sanctity and chastity'. But if he does so [sc. touch his wife or a woman], it is neither good nor bad. So when they were dispersed among the nations, God gave them precepts that were not good, which is to say: he delivered them to their own thoughts and desires, so that they did what is not befitting". It is interesting to observe that we have here the only vague reminiscence of the rabbinic discussion of our text: it refers to the situation of the Jews in the diaspora, so 'not-good' does not mean 'bad' or 'evil', but 'far from being ideal'. The difference, however, is that whereas the rabbis explained the 'laws that are not good' as rabbinic rules that are not rewarding, Jerome regards them as the thoughts and desires of the people, to which God delivered them.

The last Christian interpreter we will deal with is Theodoret of Cyrrhus in Syria, one of the finest representatives of the Antiochene school. In his *Expositio in Ezechielem, ad* 20:25, he remarks[52]: "There are some interpreters who have taken these words to refer to idolatry, because they thought that 'I gave' stands for 'I conceded' [συνεχώρησα]. But they are absolutely unclear in their interpretation of the text, for no right-minded person would call the godless idolatry 'not good', he would call it 'utterly bad'. So it is unthinkable that the source of wisdom, the lawgiver of piety, the accuser of godlessness, would have called this utter godlessness just 'not good'! For he calls it the limit of evil. But it is exactly that which makes it such a puzzling remark, for when he says, 'I gave them rules by which a man, if he keeps them, will live' [Ez. 20:11], he means the Decalogue. But they transgressed it, and when they continued trampling upon it, he bound them, yes, nailed them down with other laws, which could not at all give them life, but by keeping those and being busy with them they stopped transgressing the laws that were really necessary. (...) For because they were pressed to be busy keeping those laws, they

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51 Note the double translation of the ambiguous Greek: καλὸν ἀνθρώπῳ γυναικὸς μὴ ἅπτεσθαι.

52 PG 81, 996.

were no longer in a position to have contempt for those equally necessary and useful laws. It is for that reason that he did not say that he gave them 'bad' laws, but 'not good' laws. For he did not teach them 'badness', and also it was not something that in itself produced virtue, but it compelled them to frequent God's temple and to serve God. For the one who believed himself to be impure ran to his purification-rite, but when he arrived there, he remembered God. And this very memory expelled his impious thought and brought him back to observance of God's laws. Truly, these rules in themselves are 'not good', for they do not agree with God's purpose, but they are a kind of adaptation to the weakness of the people who are the subjects of God's legislation. Truly, they are 'not good', they are not necessary, but they led people to the good and the necessary". This is an important passage, if only because it gives us information concerning other (anonymous) interpreters, whose work is now lost, and who seem to have explained Ez. 20:25 in the sense of God's conceding (συγχωρεῖν) idolatry to the people. Theodoret emphatically rejects this interpretation and states as his own that the 'laws that are not good' were necessary in order to make the people keep the 'good laws', *i.e.*, they functioned as a sort of 'fence around the Torah', albeit in a very different sense from the rabbinic use of this expression.

When we survey this wide range of interpretations, at least one thing is immediately clear: for the Christians Ez. 20:25 always referred to the commandments of the Torah itself or their interpretation—the implication being that they had been superseded by God's will—, whereas for the Jews they never referred to the Torah but only to rabbinic rules or to pagan laws. There can be little doubt that the necessity of reinterpreting our passage became for the Jewish community a matter of urgency because of the way Christian exegetes deployed it in an antinomian and anti-Jewish sense. The surmise that the Jewish way of handling our text was a reaction to the way it was interpreted by Christian exegetes cannot be substantiated, but the fact that we see the Jewish discussion of the passage arising only in the first half of the third century—notice the prominence of R. Johanan in the rabbinic

passages![53]—makes it a rather plausible guess, since we have seen that the anti-Jewish use of the text by Christians started shortly before, namely in the final decades of the second century. What was at stake in those early centuries after the schism was nothing less than "the position of the Jews as the covenanted people of God".[54]

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[53] Johanan is Johanan bar Nappaha, an Palestinian Amora of the second generation; see [H. L. Strack -] G. Stemberger, *Einleitung in Talmud und Midrasch*, München 1982, 91.

[54] Smolar & Aberbach, The Golden Calf Episode 93.

I am indebted to Dr. James N. Pankhurst for revising my English.

# Mourning becomes Jerusalem

## Josephus, Jesus the Son of Ananias, and the Book of Baruch (I Baruch)

Marinus A. Wes

Jerusalem, the year of our Lord 62, the Feast of Tabernacles. A feast of joy and gladness. The heat and dryness of the summer are over, the harvest has been gathered in. Pilgrims flock to the city, singing songs as they travel. Sixteen of the one hundred and fifty songs in the book of Psalms are explicitly called pilgrim's songs. Psalm 122, for instance:

> I rejoiced when they said to me,
> 'Let us go the house of the Lord.'
> Now we are standing
> within your gates, Jerusalem[1].

Often the joy of these songs is the joy of people who are moving from a place of oppression to a place where they hope to find refuge and safety. The *De Profundis* is also a pilgrim's song, Psalm 130. The person who is oppressed and enslaved in his village, or, as Psalm 123 puts it, 'more than filled with scorning, more than filled with the insults of the arrogant and with the contempt of the proud', and who is travelling to Jerusalem, hopes for protection, redress, help, 'help in the name of the Lord, maker of heaven and earth' (Psalm 124).

He is far from sure that this help will actually come, and sometimes this overshadows the pilgrim's feelings of joy. A few lines from Psalm 42:

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[1] Preliminary note: Quotations from the Bible are according to *The Revised English Bible*, Oxford-Cambridge 1989; quotations from Josephus are according to the translation of Josephus' works in the *Loeb Classical Library*: *The Jewish War*, abbreviated *JW*, and the *Jewish Antiquities*, abbreviated *JA*.

As a hind longs for the running streams,
so I long for you, my God.
I thirst for God, the living God;
when shall I come to appear in his presence?
Tears are my food day and night.

No tears in Jerusalem. But when the pilgrim returns to his village, nothing has changed there. Besides hope, however, he preserves the memory of his entrance into the city, and in bad times this keeps him going:

As I pour out my soul in distress, I call to mind
how I marched in the ranks of the great to God's house,
among exultant shouts of praise, the clamour of the pilgrims.

A few lines from Psalm 43:

Uphold my cause, God, and give judgement for me;
rescue me from liars and evil men.
For you are my God, my refuge;
why have you rejected me?
Why must I go like a mourner, oppressed by my foes?
Send out your light and your truth to be my guide;
let them lead me to your holy hill, to your dwelling-place.
Then I shall come to the altar of God,
the God of my joy and delight,
and praise you with the lyre, God my God.

Immediately doubts follow:

Why are you cast down, o my soul?
and why are you so disquieted within me?

Because of the knowledge that soon 'our feet shall stand within the gates of Jerusalem', the voice of doubt is drowned in the jubilations of the celebrating crowd:

Why are you cast down, o my soul?
and why are you so disquieted within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him,
my deliverer, my God.

The arrival in Jerusalem, 'by far the most splendid city in the East' according to a Roman contemporary who cannot be accused of chauvinism, the Elder Pliny.[2] The whole city is in festive attire, a city of—at a low estimate—20,000 inhabitants, flooded by a

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[2] Pliny the Elder, *Historia Naturalis*, v 70.

celebrating crowd of 180,000 pilgrims.[3] If we take a higher and, in my view, more realistic estimate, we have to say: a city of 30,000, or 55,000, or 80,000, or perhaps even 120,000 inhabitants, flooded by a celebrating crowd of perhaps 300,000 to 500,000 pilgrims.[4]

In 62, after a construction period of more than eighty years, with interruptions and intervening devastations, Herod's temple complex was almost completed. The eventual completion a year later gave rise to a problem: 18,000 workers—the number comes from Josephus—stood to lose their jobs. Other work was rapidly sought and found: they could pave the streets of Jerusalem 'with white stone'. Financing this new project was no problem: there was enough money, and the Jews preferred to spend it in the form of a disguised welfare benefit—everybody got their wages for the entire day after working just one hour—rather than keep it in the temple coffers. Preferably they wanted to have no money in the temple coffers at all, 'owing to their fear of the Romans', as Josephus writes.[5] This fear was not unfounded. In 66, on the eve of the uprising, the then procurator Gessius Florus in fact took seventeen talents out of the temple treasury. Protests only provoked him to appropriate more money, and the riots which followed led to heavy-handed military intervention, in which according to Josephus countless peaceful citizens, including Jews who held Roman citizenship and were even members of the *ordo equester*,[6] were arrested, sentenced, flogged, and finally crucified in summary proceedings. Josephus puts the total number of victims at 3,600.[7]

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[3] J.H. Charlesworth, *Jesus within Judaism*, London 1990, 116, following J. Jeremias, *Jerusalem in the Time of Jesus*, Philadelphia 1969, 84.

[4] E.P. Sanders, *Judaism. Practice and Belief 63 BCE-66 CE*, London 1992, 125-128; Gerhard Kroll, *Auf den Spuren Jesu*, Leipzig 1988, 122, 312, 444 n. 239; M. Avi-Yonah, Historical Geography of Palestine, in S. Safrai & M. Stern (eds.), *The Jewish People in the First Century*, vol. I, Assen 1974, 108-110; S. Safrai, The Temple, *ibidem*, vol. II, Assen 1976, 902; M. Hengel, *Die Zeloten*, Leiden $^{2}$1976, 361 n. 1; J. Wilkinson, *Jerusalem as Jesus knew it*, London 1978, 23 and 66.

[5] *JA* xv 380; *JW* i 401; *JA* xx 219-223; E.M. Smallwood, *The Jews under Roman Rule*, Leiden 1976, 282-283 n. 89 (her assertion that 'substantial damage was caused by the earthquake at the time of the Crucifixion' is rather naive).

[6] M. Hengel, *Crucifixion*, London 1977, 39-45; A.H.M. Jones, *Studies in Roman Government and Law*, Oxford 1968, 51-65, esp. 56-57.

[7] *JW* ii 293-308.

The great pilgrim feasts were opportunities when the Jewish leaders had particular reason to be afraid of the Romans. In the past these feasts had repeatedly led to rioting. They knew from experience that only a tiny incident was needed to spark off major disturbances. We can assume that Josephus' reports are not exhaustive. He mentions only the most serious cases of public tumult, the nadir being at the Passover of 49, when many thousands of fatalities occurred.[8]

During the Feast of Tabernacles in 62 another small incident took place. Again Josephus is our only source. At first the significance of the event had escaped him. It was only later in Rome, after the destruction of the Temple, when he was writing his book about the Jewish revolt, that he saw in the event a portent of the drama of 70, a portent which many of those involved had failed to recognize. The incident in Josephus' account:[9]

> Four years before the war ... there came to the feast at which it is the custom of all Jews to erect tabernacles for God, one Jesus, son of Ananias, a rude peasant, who, standing in the temple, suddenly began to cry out, 'A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds; a voice against Jerusalem and the sanctuary, a voice against the bridegroom and the bride, a voice against all the people.'

A solo protest demonstration by an obscure peasant. Evidently his performance in the temple had not been noticed by the security guards. This is not so surprising when one considers that during the Feast of Tabernacles the faithful probably assembled in the temple complex all at the same time and that the total number of spectators which the complex could hold is estimated at 400,000.[10] Similarly, thirty years earlier, when Jesus of Nazareth went into the city with his companions to celebrate the Passover in his own way, among a crowd of other pilgrims, he was not at first noticed by the attendants and the authorities, and they did not manage to

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[8] Passover 49 CE: *JW* ii 224-227 puts the number of dead at 30,000, *JA* xx 105-112 at 20,000. Other cases: the Feast of Tabernacles during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus (103-76 BCE), 6,000 dead according to *JA* xiii 372-373; Feast of Weeks 4 BCE, number of dead not mentioned, but 2,000 Jews crucified afterwards: *JA* xvii 254-268 and 295, *JW* ii 42-54 and 75; Passover 4 CE, 3,000 dead: *JW* ii 10-13 and *JA* xvii 213-218.

[9] *JW* vi 300-301.

[10] Sanders, *Judaism*, 127.

arrest him immediately after he had carried out his act of protest, which in the gospels is known as the cleansing of the temple.[11] He could simply leave the city and spend the night in the open field among the many other visitors from elsewhere.[12]

Jesus the son of Ananias stayed in the city. 'Day and night he went about all the streets with this cry on his lips', Josephus writes. And he goes on:[13]

> Some of the leading citizens, incensed at these ill-omened words, arrested the fellow and severely chastised him. But he, without a word on his own behalf or for the private ear of those who smote him, only continued his cries as before.

It becomes a matter for the city government, which finds the affair important enough to have the man arrested and handed over to the Roman governor at the time, Lucceius Albinus:[14]

> There, although flayed to the bone with scourges, he neither sued for mercy nor shed a tear, but, merely introducing the most mournful of variations into his ejaculation, responded to each stroke with 'Woe to Jerusalem!' When Albinus, the governor, asked him who and whence he was and why he uttered these cries, he answered him never a word, but unceasingly reiterated his dirge over the city, until Albinus pronounced him a maniac and let him go.

The incident raises a few questions. What were the motives of Jesus the son of Ananias? Was he in fact a maniac? Or is there more to it? And why did the city councillors hand him over to Albinus? It can only mean that they would have liked to see him executed. Only the Roman governor had the right to sentence someone to death, and for the execution of such a death sentence he had his own people.[15] But Albinus simply let him go.

Interestingly, Jesus the son of Ananias seems to have come to Jerusalem on his own. And he did not return to his village, but stayed in Jerusalem. What happened to him there? Josephus again:[16]

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11 Mark 11:15-19 and parallels.
12 Sanders, *Judaism*, 127.
13 *JW* vi 302.
14 *JW* vi 304-305.
15 Sanders, *Judaism*, 540 n. 40; A.N. Sherwin White, *Roman Society and Roman Law in the New Testament*, Oxford 1963, 36: 'the capital power was the most jealously guarded of all the attributes of government'.
16 *JW* vi 306-309.

> During the whole period up to the outbreak of the war he neither approached nor was seen talking to any of the citizens, but daily, like a prayer that he had conned, repeated his lament, 'Woe to Jerusalem!' He neither cursed any of those who beat him from day to day, nor blessed those who offered him food: to all men that melancholy presage was his one reply. His cries were loudest at the festivals. So for seven years and five months he continued his wail, his voice never flagging nor his strength exhausted, until in siege, having seen his presage verified, he found his rest. For, while going his round and shouting in piercing tones from the wall, 'Woe once more to the city and to the people and to the temple', as he added a last word, 'and woe to me also', a stone hurled from the *ballista* struck and killed him on the spot.

Usually—and certainly for the Feast of Tabernacles—pilgrims went to Jerusalem *en famille*. This, too, we know thanks to Josephus: 'all the people streamed from their villages to the city and celebrated the festival in a state of purity with their wives and children, according to the laws of their fathers.'[17] It was thus at Passover, it was also thus at the Feast of Tabernacles. When Gaius Cestius Gallus, *legatus pro praetore* of the province of Syria, advanced on rebellious Jerusalem in 66 and stopped along the way at Lydda (Lod), a district capital in western Judea, he found the city empty, because, as Josephus writes, 'the whole population had gone up to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles. Fifty persons who showed themselves he put to the sword, and after burning down the town he resumed his march.'[18]

It is out of the question that Jesus the son of Ananias never had any family. He had at least had two parents, and it is quite conceivable that he lost his home and wife and children and went up to Jerusalem out of sheer misery, frightened out of his wits, as a victim of the terror spread by the warring militant groups. For Josephus also tells us that in the early sixties Judea was plagued by the terrorist actions of the *sicarii*. One after the other, entire villages were plundered and burned. This had already started in the fifties, when Antonius Felix was procurator: 'not a day passed', writes Josephus,[19] 'but that Felix captured and put to death many of these impostors and brigands (read: messianistic prophets and terrorists).' Under Felix's successors Porcius Festus (60-62) and

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17 *JA* xi 109.
18 *JW* ii 515-516.
19 *JA* xx 160.

Lucceius Albinus (62-64) matters had only become worse: 'from this date were sown in the city the seeds of its impending fall', according to Josephus.[20] One might also suggest that Jesus the son of Ananias had voluntarily made himself a man *sans famille* to suit his role as a receiver and conveyor of prophecies. This would be in line with traditional Jewish views on the conditions to which the prophetic gift is subject.[21] But the text of Josephus offers no support for this kind of conjecture.[22]

The lines which Josephus has devoted to poor Jesus the son of Ananias sound authentic and sober. They are free of rhetorical pathos. Josephus was in Jerusalem himself, in 62 and in 65-66, and it does not seem too bold to assume that he himself had encountered this Jesus. In various other descriptions of prophets or those who tried to pass as prophets Josephus always accuses such figures of being false prophets and frauds and madmen.[23] He could hardly say this about Jesus the son of Ananias, at least in retrospect, since the events of 70 had dramatically confirmed his words. Yet Josephus never calls him a prophet. It is only with hindsight that he realizes that the cries of this man had been a sign from God. He then compares them with the sound of mysterious, unattached voices which had called out to some priests who had entered the innermost part of the temple for the nocturnal liturgy during the harvest festival: 'We are departing hence'.[24]

Jesus the son of Ananias *could* not be a prophet according to the views of the Jewish elite on prophets and prophecy in the first century CE, and so according to Josephus' own views. And, unlike Josephus himself, he met none of the conditions obtaining to those who claimed any kind of prophetic gift. It is therefore virtually certain that, *during* the utterings of Jesus the son of Ananias, Josephus did not take the man seriously, regarded him, too, as a false prophet, and was possibly just as much annoyed by

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20 *JW* ii 276; see also *JA* xx 185, 187, 206, 210, 214, 215.

21 G. Vermes, *Jesus the Jew. A Historian's Reading of the Gospels*, London 1977, 99-102.

22 The attempt to establish a close link between *JW* vi 300-309 *as a story* and Ezekiel 3:24-27 has failed: see M. Greenberg, On Ezekiel's Dumbness, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 77 (1958) 101-105.

23 *JW* ii 258, 259, 261, 264, 265; vi 285-288; *JA* xx 97-98, 160, 167-169, 188.

24 *JW* vi 299.

him as the 'leading citizens' and other unidentified persons who beat him up daily.[25]

Jesus the son of Ananias was a false prophet, these eminent citizens must have thought. In their eyes he was therefore a troublemaker. This might explain why the city councillors handed him over to Albinus. False prophets were dangerous, they believed. Had there been no procurator, as earlier in the same year 62 (Porcius Festus had died and his successor Albinus had not yet arrived at his new post), the Jewish leaders probably would *not* have let Jesus the son of Ananias go free. This assumption can be based on the unlawful execution, at the instigation of the high priest Ananus, of the 'brother of the Lord' James and a few other undesirable elements, probably disciples of James.[26] This execution had only been possible owing to the absence of a Roman governor.

There is no reason to assume that Jesus the son of Ananias was also a disciple of James. According to Josephus, James and his followers had been accused of breaking the Jewish law. He does not write that James and his group had set themselves up as prophets or pseudo-prophets. Yet there is a suggestion to this effect, in Eusebius' extensive account of James.[27] In this account we read, among other things, that James bore the epithet 'the Just'. Eusebius bases himself here on Hegesippus, whom he quotes at length. This quotation shows—and it is not surprising—that James most certainly had set himself up as a prophet by proclaiming in the Temple, in terms derived from Daniel 7:13, the imminent second coming, 'with the clouds of heaven', of the Son of Man. Then, says Hegesippus, the scribes and the Pharisees attacked James and killed him. One of the priests tried to stop them ('Stop! What are you doing? The Just is praying for you'), but they were uncontrollable and James was clubbed down. Eusebius immediately goes on to write:

Thus it seems that James was indeed a remarkable man and famous

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[25] J. Blenkinsopp, Prophecy and Priesthood in Josephus, *J. of Jew. Stud.* 25 (1974) 239-262, esp. 246 n. 27 and 252; Vermes, *Jesus*, 86-99.

[26] *JA* xx 199-203.

[27] Eusebius, *The Ecclesiastical History*, transl. Kirsopp Lake, London (Loeb) 1975, ii 23.

> among all for his righteousness, so that the wise even of the Jews thought that this (i.e. James' martyrdom) was the cause of the siege of Jerusalem immediately after his martyrdom, and that it happened for no other reason than the crime which they had committed against him.

To support this conclusion Eusebius refers to Josephus, whom he quotes as follows:

> And all these things happened to the Jews to avenge James the Just, who was the brother of Jesus the so-called Christ, for the Jews killed him *in spite of* his great righteousness.

This final quotation cannot be found in Josephus' work. So it can be rejected in its entirety. But, by analogy with the now generally accepted opinion about the *Testimonium Flavianum* on Jesus of Nazareth, one could also argue that it does contain an element of Josephus. This can only be in the final part of the quotation. That Josephus causally linked James' martyrdom and the destruction of Jerusalem is pure nonsense. But Josephus might have written that the Jews killed James *because* he was a righteous man. James, then, was called the Just owing to his prophetic capacity. The combination of prophet and just man reminds one of Qumran. It also brings to mind a place in the gospel according to Matthew, in which the terms prophet and just man are clearly used as synonyms. In Matth. 23:29 Jesus says:

> You (i.e. the scribes and Pharisees) build up the tombs (*taphous*) of the prophets and embellish the monuments (*mnèmeia*) of the just.[28]

It seems safe to assume that James, too, like Jesus the son of Ananias a few months later, was attacked by certain Jewish leaders because they regarded him as a dangerous false prophet. I think it quite likely that James in 62 also proclaimed the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple, since such a proclamation is completely in line with what his brother Jesus of Nazareth did thirty years earlier, the so-called cleansing of the Temple. In my

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[28] According to Blenkinsopp, 258 n. 89, the parallelism is worthy of further investigation; cf. *JA* xii 43, 157-158; xiv 22-24; G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*, Harmondsworth (Penguin) [2]1977, 50; id., *Scripture and Tradition*, Leiden 1961, 66; A.S. van der Woude, *Die messianischen Vorstellungen der Gemeinde von Quamrân*, Assen 1957, was, as far as I know, the first to suggest that the Prophet of the Qumran Community is to be identified with the Teacher of Righteousness.

opinion, E.P. Sanders has convincingly shown that this act was in the nature of a symbolic demonstration against, or, more precisely, a symbolic destruction of the Temple. In his analysis of the relevant texts Sanders reaches the conclusion 'that Jesus publicly predicted or threatened the destruction, that the statement was shaped by his expectation of the arrival of the eschaton, that he probably also expected a new temple to be given by God from heaven, and that he made a demonstration which prophetically symbolized the coming event.'[29]

To proclaim the destruction of the Temple is not necessarily to turn one's back on the Temple as it (still) existed at the time. The followers of Jesus of Nazareth 'kept up their daily attendance at the temple' after Jesus' death.[30] They also continue to proclaim there, to the constant annoyance of the Temple's supervisor and priests. The highpriests Annas and Caiaphas call Peter and John to account, reprimand them threateningly, and then let them go.[31] The reprimand has no effect, the apostles are rearrested, and now Annas and the others want them put to death. This is prevented by a noble Pharisee, Gamaliel, who plays the same kind of role here as Albinus in the case against Jesus the son of Ananias in 62: Peter and his associates are beaten, but then released.[32]

In 62 there is no Roman procurator or Jewish Pharisee to curb the highpriest Ananus, a son of Annas and brother-in-law of Caiaphas. James is put to death. It seems to me there can be no doubt that, like Jesus of Nazareth thirty years earlier and Jesus the son of Ananias a few months later, James proclaimed the destruction of the Temple. As I said before, Josephus was in Jerusalem in 62 and 65-66. I can hardly imagine that he knew no more about the proceedings against James than the little he wrote about it. In any case it seems clear that, from his point of view *at that time*, James was a false prophet.

But in his account of the execution of James in the *Antiquities*, written certainly twenty and possibly even thirty years later, Josephus' sympathy is clearly, if indirectly, with James, not Ananus.

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29 E.P Sanders, *Jesus and Judaism*, London 1985, 69-75.

30 Acts 2:46.

31 Acts 4:5-21.

32 Acts 5:34-40.

Ananus is condemned in no uncertain terms: 'The younger Ananus was rash in his temper and unusually daring. He followed the school of the Sadducees, who are indeed more heartless than any of the other Jews when they sit in judgement.' By contrast, Josephus describes in positive terms how a number of people who were among the most honourable citizens of the city and who obeyed the law with utmost rigour—presumably Pharisees, like Gamaliel[33]—took the matter very seriously and lodged protests with King Agrippa II and even with the Roman authorities. The protests were effective: Ananus was dismissed as highpriest.[34]

Josephus' negative opinion of Ananus in the *Antiquities* contrasts sharply with his extremely positive opinion of Ananus in *The Jewish War*, written in the seventies. There, for Josephus, Ananus is 'a man of profound sanity' and the ideal leader,[35] and when this noble hero is murdered by the Idumeans, Josephus praises him to the skies:[36]

> A man on every ground revered and of the highest integrity, Ananus, with all the distinction of his birth, his rank and the honours to which he had attained, yet delighted to treat the very humblest as his equals. Unique in his love of liberty and an enthusiast for democracy, he on all occasions put the public welfare above his private interests. To maintain peace was his supreme object.

I cannot dwell here on the shifting relationship between Josephus and Ananus and on the considerations which may have led Josephus to revise so drastically his opinion of Ananus, who in 66 had appointed him commander of the Jewish rebels in Galilee. But I suggest that Pharisean circles in Rome contributed substantially to this revision of Josephus' position. Arguments supporting this have been put forward by Shaye Cohen and Seth Schwartz.[37]

The point here is that the shift from positive to negative in Josephus' opinion of Ananus logically justifies the claim that there was a reverse shift, from negative to positive, in Josephus' opinion of Jesus the son of Ananias and of James. But the latter

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33 Sanders, *Judaism*, 419-420 and 469.
34 *JA* xx 199-203.
35 *JW* iv 151, 160, 162-192.
36 *JW* iv 319-321.
37 S.J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, Leiden 1979, 237-238; S. Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaean Politics*, Leiden 1990, 172-200.

shift was not so extensive that Josephus was retrospectively prepared to give these messengers of doom for the Temple the title of prophets. Given the 'orthodox' Jewish view, also held by Josephus, that the era of the prophets had come to an end, it is perhaps better to say that Josephus was mentally incapable of giving Jesus the son of Ananias and James the title of prophets.

We can add something here. Jesus of Nazareth had already indicated that the Temple would soon be no more. His prediction, too, had come true. This prediction, if he knew about it, must have made a great impression on Josephus after 70, but again he could not conclude from it that Jesus was *therefore* a prophet. What he did hear about, probably via the Pharisees or possibly even the Christians in Rome, was that Jesus of Nazareth was called *messias*. Even if one thinks that the entire *Testimonium Flavianum* on Jesus is a later interpolation, the fact remains that, in his account of the death of James, Josephus introduces James as 'the brother of Jesus who was called the Christ', and he also mentions that there is still a group of people in his, Josephus', time who call themselves followers of the Christ, or Christians.[38]

If it is true that Josephus changed his opinion of James in a positive sense, this also explains why Josephus may have expressed a favourable opinion of his brother Jesus. For the rest I have nothing to add to the article in which Paul Winter in 1968 argued the partial authenticity of the *Testimonium Flavianum*. The publication by Shlomo Pines in 1971 of an Arabic version of the *Testimonium* in the world history of Agapius of Hierapolis effectively confirmed and added more details to Winter's reconstruction.[39]

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[38] *JA* xvii 63-64.

[39] P. Winter, Josephus on Jesus and James, in: Emil Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ*, a new English version revised & edited by Geza Vermes and Fergus Millar, vol. I, Edinburgh 1973, 428-441 (originally published in 1968); S. Pines, *An Arabic Version of the Testimonium Flavianum and its Implications*, Jerusalem 1971, mentioned and commented upon by G. Cornfield *et al.* (eds.), *Josephus. The Jewish War. Newly Translated with Extensive Commentary and Archaeological Background Illustrations*, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1982, 510; Charlesworth, *Jesus*, 95-98.

## II

Back to the Feast of Tabernacles of 62 and the proclamation of Jesus the son of Ananias. Josephus carefully quotes the words spoken by the 'rude peasant' the first time in the Temple:

> A voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds; a voice against Jerusalem and the sanctuary, a voice against the bridegroom and the bride, a voice against all the people.

The message sounds biblical, and so it is. The image of the bridegroom and the bride against whom a voice is raised comes from the book of Jeremiah. It occurs there in four places: 7:34, 16:9, 25:10, 33:11. The first text, including part of the context, reads as follows:[40]

> Jerusalem, cut off your hair and throw it away; raise a lament on the bare heights. For the Lord has spurned and forsaken the generation that roused his wrath. The people of Judah have done what is wrong in my eyes, says the Lord.
>
> The corpses of this people will become food for the birds of the air and the wild beasts, with none to scare them away. From the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem I shall banish all sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bridegroom and bride; for the whole land will become desert.
>
> All the survivors of this wicked race, wherever I have banished them, would rather die than live. This is the word of the Lord of Hosts.

Truly food for thought for Josephus and all those who had come to Rome from Jerusalem. Besides Jeremiah, there are just two writings which also evoke the image of the disrupted wedding, clearly a symbol of the approach of the divine judgement: Revelation (18:23) and the apocryphal I Baruch (2:23). But more about these later.

With regard to the interpretation of Josephus' account, the first question is whether the words which Josephus attributes to Jesus the son of Ananias can be regarded as his *ipsissima verba*, or whether we are wiser to see them as words of Josephus which he later put into Jesus' mouth in the light of the drama of 70. Everybody who has done some *Leben Jesu Forschung* knows the problem. Nobody denies that a certain Jesus the son of Ananias, of whom

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40 Jeremiah 7:29-30, 33-34; 8:3.

we know nothing more, presented himself in Jerusalem and in the Temple in 62 with some or other prophecy of doom. But this says nothing about the question: what *exactly* did this Jesus proclaim?

Could an ordinary Jewish peasant be capable of remembering Jeremiah's image of banished wedding festivities? I see no reason why not. Every Jew, from childhood on, was familiarized with the Scriptures by regular readings in the synagogue.[41] The pseudo-prophets among the rebels, so despised by Josephus, also knew their classics. 'Despite the brevity of his allusions, Josephus betrays the biblical basis of the claims made by these people', Blenkinsopp casually remarks.[42] Take for instance the painful example of the six thousand unfortunate people, including many women and children, who had assembled in the forecourt during the final phase of the Roman conquest of the Temple and had all died there in the flames. The Romans watched powerlessly, Josephus suggests: 'They (i.e. those six thousand) owed their destruction to a false prophet, who had on that day proclaimed to the people in the city that God commanded them to go up to the temple court, to receive there the tokens of their deliverance.'[43] This anonymous false prophet evidently appealed to the people with reference to the book of Joel, chapters 1 and 2:

> 1:6: ... A horde, vast and past counting, has invaded my land; they have teeth like a lion's teeth; they have the fangs of a lioness. ... 1:8: Wail like a virgin in sackcloth, wailing over the betrothed of her youth ... 2:15-16: Blow the trumpet in Zion, ... gather the people together, ... gather the children, even babes at the breast; bid the bridegroom leave his wedding-chamber and the bride her bower ...

And then Joel describes the day of the Lord, 2:28-32:

> After this I shall pour out my spirit on all mankind; your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams and your young men see visions; I shall pour out my spirit in those days even on slaves and slave-girls. I shall set portents in the sky and on earth, blood and fire and columns of smoke. The sun will be turned to darkness and

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41 Sanders, *Judaism*, 17-19; S. Safrai, The Synagogue, in Safrai & Stern, *Jewish People*, vol. II, 927-933.

42 Blenkinsopp, 260 n. 98; cf. P.W. Barnett, The Jewish Sign Prophets A.D. 40-70. Their Intentions and Origin, *New Testament Studies* 27 (1981) 679-697.

43 *JW* vi 283-285.

> the moon to blood before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord. Then everyone who invokes the Lord's name will be saved: on Mount Zion in Jerusalem there will be a remnant as the Lord has promised, survivors whom the Lord calls.

There were no survivors on Mount Zion, the six thousand all perished. Therefore the anonymous figure who had sent the six thousand to the forecourt of the Temple was, in the eyes of Josephus, a false prophet and dangerous fanatic.

But this fanatic did know his Bible. We know nothing further about this false prophet of the summer of 70. So there is no reason to assume that he was a 'rude peasant' like Jesus the son of Ananias. He may have fled head over heels from the Qumran community in the summer of 68, when a Roman military unit of Vespasian smashed and burned the place. He may have set out for Jerusalem, following the example of Joel and other prophets. García Martínez has pointed out the prominence in the Qumran Community of the view that 'the true significance of the prophetic writings is connected, not with the historical reality of the prophets nor with the time in which their writings originated, but with "the last times", i.e. with the historical present of the Community, the last period of history, which immediately precedes the divine judgement.'[44] It is tempting to believe that Jesus the son of Ananias was also someone who put this form of 'eschatologization' into practice, but this is in conflict with Josephus' summary description: 'a rude peasant'. Seth Schwartz concludes that 'the resemblance to *Jeremiah* will be due not to Josephus, but to the peasant or to some popular preacher whose words evoked the peasant's cries.'[45] Since Jeremiah is mentioned in the *Damascus Rule* (viii 19-21), such a hypothetical 'popular preacher' could well be placed in the context of the Qumran Community.

Besides the 'peasant's cries', there are still the matters of his silence and the daily beatings he receives. He is also silent when people give him alms. There is a striking parallel here with the behaviour of the prophet Ezekiel, as Moshe Greenberg already

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[44] F. García Martínez, Profeet and profetie in de geschriften van Qumran, in: F. García Martínez *et al.* (eds.), *Profeten en profetische geschriften*, Kampen-Nijkerk 1986, 119-132, esp. p. 120. Barnett in his comment on 'the Egyptian' correctly refers to *4QTest* (walls of Jerusalem instead of Jericho).

[45] Schwartz, 34-35.

demonstrated in 1958, but unlike Greenberg I am inclined to see a parallel here between Jesus the son of Ananias and Ezekiel rather than between Josephus and Ezekiel.[46] With regard to the beatings and the completely passive manner in which Jesus the son of Ananias undergoes them, there is moreover a degree of similarity with two passages from Lamentations, namely 3:4—'He has wasted away my flesh and my skin and broken my bones' and, especially, 3:26-32:

> It is good to wait in patience for deliverance by the Lord.
> It is good for a man to bear the yoke from youth.
> Let him sit alone in silence if it is heavy on him;
> let him lie face downwards on the ground,
> and there may yet be hope;
> let him offer his cheek to the smiter
> and endure full measure of abuse.
> For rejection by the Lord does not last forever.
> He may punish, yet he will have compassion
> in the fullness of his unfailing love.

The first passage could, as it were, be placed in the margin of Josephus' text at the words 'flayed to the bone with scourges'; the second passage is parallel to the repeated emphasis on the man's passivity in Josephus, who is apparently rather surprised about this attitude: he never stood up for himself, never said anything, not even when asked, never flinched when beaten, never thanked anyone for food, and only found rest when the siege had started and he saw that his prediction had come true.

In the first century CE the book of Lamentations was still widely attributed to Jeremiah, as Josephus also does. There are more places in *The Jewish War* where passages from Lamentations can be added in the margin. Two good examples are 2:20—'Must women eat the fruit of their wombs, the children they have held in their arms?' and 4:10—'With their own hands tender-hearted women boiled their own children; their children became their food on the day of my people's wounding'. Both texts perfectly fit the gruesome story of Maria the daughter of Eleazar, who eats her own child in *The Jewish War* vi 201-213. Modern scholars are apt to point out that we are dealing here with a *topos* or typology, and I will not deny that they are often useful in making texts more

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46 See above, n. 22.

'transparent' and therefore more understandable in this way. But it is taking things too far, in my view, when the description by a classical historian-cum-eyewitness of a siege, say Josephus' description of the siege of Jotapata, is completely reduced to a standard description according to the rules of the chapter *How to Describe a Siege* in some or other rhetorical manual. Nor do I find it very enlightening, though no doubt it is witty, when the relationship between Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon is presented as a kind of 're-enactment' of the relationship between Joseph and the King of Egypt in the Old Testament.[47] Rather I would endorse Zvi Yavetz's criticism of the exaggerated search for *topoi* taken from Graeco-Roman literature in Josephus' historical writing: 'It would be much sounder to assume that similar circumstances in different places and in different periods engender similar phenomena.'[48]

I cannot offer firm proof here, but for reasons of historical credibility, common sense, and intuition I prefer not to regard the elements from Jeremiah in Josephus' account of Jesus the son of Ananias as the result of Josephus' technique of literary composition, but to attribute them to Jesus the son of Ananias himself.

Perhaps we should leave it at this and be satisfied with the conclusion that Jesus the son of Ananias picked up his Jeremiah reminiscences somewhere in a synagogue or from a 'popular preacher'. But this is not a very substantial conclusion. Therefore I have tried, with all the uncertainty involved in such an attempt, to go a little further. I have investigated the reception of the book of Jeremiah in the period from around 100 BCE to 100 CE. Fortunately somebody else has already investigated the same subject. Christian Wolff published a well-documented study on this material in 1976.[49] His conclusion is that, for the most part in the above period, Jeremiah was by no means as popular as one might have thought.

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47 D. Daube, Typology in Josephus, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 31 (1980) 18-36.

48 Z. Yavetz, Reflections on Titus and Josephus, *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 16 (1975) 419-420.

49 Ch. Wolff, *Jeremia im Frühjudentum und Urchristentum*, Berlin 1976; see also J. Carmignac, Les citations de l'Ancient Testament, et spécialement des Poèmes du Serviteur, dans les Hymnes de Qumrân, *Revue de Qumrân* 7 (1960) 357-394; Ch. Rabin, *The Zadokite Documents*, Oxford 1954, 78-79.

From the period before the destruction of Jerusalem there is only one collection of texts which show an orientation to Jeremiah in a few places. These are the *Hymns* of Qumran. The material is scanty, according to Wolff, who in general takes a rather minimalist attitude. He accepts only three places as absolutely certain. Three others are somewhat questionable on account of the deficient tradition of the text, but they deserve the benefit of the doubt. And there are eight texts which may go back to Jeremiah, but for which other authors are, so to speak, also in the market. Elsewhere in the Qumran documents Wolff did not find any traces of Jeremiah.[50] Of course, fragments of manuscripts of the book of Jeremiah have been recovered, of three manuscripts to be precise, of which the latest is dated to around the time of Jesus of Nazareth's birth,[51] but a commentary on Jeremiah is lacking so far. For all his caution Wolff does venture the conclusion, on the basis of what he believes to be a marginal gloss in the text of the *Damascus Rule*, that Jeremiah, though occupying a less prominent position than Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah, 'was important for the people of Qumran as a penitential preacher.'[52]

A scholarly theory not confirmed by the texts of Qumran is that already before 70 CE many Jews believed that Jeremiah would soon return on earth. This is inferred from the version in the gospel of Matthew of the pericope on the so-called testimony of Peter, Matthew 16:13-14:

> When he came to the territory of Caesarea Philippi, Jesus asked his disciples, 'Who do people say that the Son of Man is?' They answered, 'Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets.'

The name Jeremiah is lacking in the parallel texts in Mark (8:28) and Luke (9:19). Why does Matthew mention Jeremiah here? Wolff raises this question, but merely notes that Matthew took 'a certain interest' in this prophet (the name of Jeremiah in fact occurs in two other places in the gospel of Matthew, and is not

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50 Wolff, 124-130.

51 A.S. van der Woude, Fünfzehn Jahre Qumranforschung (1974-1978), *Theologische Rundschau* 55 (1990) 294-295.

52 Wolff, 126 n. 1, referring to DR viii 19-21.

otherwise mentioned in the New Testament) and that the book of Jeremiah was apparently well-known in Matthew's congregation. He follows Grundmann in surmising that 'Jeremiah as the prophet of Jerusalem's destruction had a special significance for Matthew's congregation'[53] and suggests that Matthew was familiar with an early Jewish tradition (earlier than 70 CE) about an expected return of Jeremiah.

An article on this subject was published in 1972 by Jean Carmignac.[54] With the persuasiveness of a scholar-and-believer, he argues that the ominous future full of 'wailing and grinding of teeth' which Jesus pictured to his listeners and followers[55] may easily have suggested to them that Jesus was a Jeremiah *redivivus*. If Carmignac is right, this makes for an interesting parallel between Jesus of Nazareth and Jesus the son of Ananias, except that the latter was much more prone to be silent. But for all his silence he did quote Jeremiah and perhaps regarded himself as a Jeremiah *redivivus*.

## III

Jesus the son of Ananias was killed by a stray missile during the siege of Jerusalem. He did not live to experience the Jeremiah boom after 70. Of course, the fact that Jeremiah left so many more traces in post-70 CE texts is not so surprising, given the obvious parallel between the destruction of the first Temple by Nebuchadnezzar and that of the second Temple by Titus. Indeed, both events supposedly took place on the same day: the Ninth of Av. This synchrony was already known to Josephus.[56] For an orthodox Jewish intellectual like Josephus, who fairly soon after the

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53 Wolff, 27-29; W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Matthäus*, Berlin 1968, 386.

54 J. Carmignac, Pourquoi Jérémie est-il mentionné en Mathieu 16, 14?, in G. Jeremias, H.-W. Kuhn & H. Stegemann (eds.), *Tradition und Glaube. Das frühe Christentum in seiner Umwelt. Festgabe für Karl Georg Kuhn zum 65. Geburtstag*, Gottingen 1971, 283-298; cf. also H.F.D. Sparks, St. Matthew's References to Jeremiah, *Journal of Theological Studies*, n.s. 1 (1950) 155-156.

55 Matth. 8:11-12; 10:14-15; 11:21-24; 12:24-35; 39-42; 45; 13:13-15; 19-22; 24-30; 36-42; 47-50, etc.

56 *JW* vi 250; Jer. 52:12; cf. Wolff, p. 34.

destruction, in his new role as a historian, had to decide on a frame of reference for his account of the events and of his own role, the only real possibility was to endorse the deuteronomistic historical view of crime and punishment and the tradition of the early prophets, in particular Jeremiah, who had warned his people so emphatically of the power awarded by God to Babylon and Nebuchadnezzar. In comparison, Thucydides and Polybius and Sallust offered no real alternative; at most—especially for the copy-editors of Josephus in Rome[57]—they might occasionally furnish an arresting phrase or some platitudes about *Tychè*, the goddess of Fortune. The Hellenistic component in the intellectual make-up of Josephus, by no means a great admirer of the Greeks, was never more than a veneer.[58]

The interesting and to some extent also ironic thing about Josephus' 'tuning in' to Jeremiah is that it puts him on the same wavelength and frequency as the authors of I Baruch, II Baruch, IV Ezra, the Paraleipomena Jeremiae, and the Revelation of John. Yet they do not all offer the same picture of Jeremiah. The authors who hark back to Jeremiah can be divided into two groups. In one group we have the Jeremiah who knows how the cards lie at the bridge table of the powers that be, who knows who shuffles and deals, who at the same time is concerned about his people in exile, and is convinced that one day the exile will come to an end. The other group, resorting to Jeremiah the prophet of doom, anticipates *eschatological* restoration and heavenly salvation.[59]

The first group includes, besides Josephus of course, the author (or final redactor) of I Baruch and the author of the Paraleipomena Jeremiae,[60] the second group the authors of II Baruch, IV Ezra, and the Revelation of John. These two groups of texts reflect fairly accurately the two movements in Judaism in the period between the destruction of the Temple by Titus and the capture of

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57 Cf. Josephus, *contra Apionem* i 50; Schwartz, 36-37.

58 For a different view, see S.J.D Cohen, Josephus, Jeremiah, and Polybius, *History and Theory* 21 (1982) 366-381.

59 Cf. G.W.E. Nickelsburg, in M.E. Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writing of the Second Temple Period*, Assen-Philadelphia 1984, 146.

60 Schürer, *History of the Jewish People*, vol. III, revised and edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Goodman, Edinburgh 1986, 292-293; Nickelsburg, in Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writing*, 72-75.

Jerusalem and the expulsion of the Jews from their city after the revolt of Bar Kokhba in the time of Hadrian. These two movements—I apologize for the terrible simplification—are, first, the eschatological dreamers, from the false prophets in Josephus to Bar Kokhba, and, second, the movement of Jochanan ben Zakkai and his circle, the rabbinical *Realpolitiker* who preached patience and perseverance. At the same time there is no watertight division between the two groups. Thus there are clear parallels between II Baruch and the Paraleipomena Jeremiae.[61] In view of these parallels, I wonder whether there is also a connection between the fact that the *beginning* of the revolt of Bar Kokhba comes precisely 66 years after the *beginning* of the first revolt, and the slight correction which the author of the Paraleipomena Jeremiae has made in Jeremiah's statement (Jer. 25:11-12 and 29:10) that the exile will last seventy years: in the Paraleipomena (5:1 and 30) this has been changed to 66 years. Instead of pursuing this, I will confine myself to the two writings in which the author, like Jesus the son of Ananias, evokes the image from Jeremiah of the banishing of wedding festivities: 'a voice against the bridegroom and the bride, a voice against all the people'. These two writings are I Baruch and the Revelation of John.

Christian Wolff has pointed out that there is no book in which so many passages from the Hebrew Bible have been incorporated as Revelation. But the references are never direct. Words, phrases, and ideas derived from the Hebrew Bible are assimilated by the author into his own language.[62] Thus there might also be continuity in the way that Revelation incorporates material from the book of Jeremiah in the description of the imminent *eschaton*, and the systematic 'eschatologization' of the early prophets in Qumran. Wolff has found material deriving from Jeremiah in 21 places in Revelation.[63] He concludes that the author apparently had access to an anthology of texts drawn from the early prophets, in which threats were uttered against foreign oppressors, in particular Tyrus and Babylon. These threats had already been 'updated' by the compiler of the anthology and applied to Rome.

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61 Wolff, 45-49; Nickelsburg, in Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writing*, 75.
62 Wolff, 166.
63 *Ibidem*, 166-174.

At least two thirds of the parallels listed by Wolff are passages from just two chapters of the book of Jeremiah (50 and 51) which have found their way into just two chapters of Revelation (17 and 18). Both cases involve the description of the divine judgement against Babylon and Rome respectively. There is only one Jeremiah text in Revelation which does *not* derive from Jeremiah 50-51 and which is directed not against Babylon but against Jerusalem. This is Jeremiah 25:10, the text of Jesus the son of Ananias; in Revelation 18:23 this text has been fused together with Isaiah 47:

> no more shall the light of the lamp appear in you, no more the voices of the bridegroom and bride be heard in you! Your traders were once the merchant princes of the world, and with your sorcery you deceived all the nations.

## IV

Then there is I Baruch. For Emil Schürer it was pellucid that this book as a whole had been written after 70 CE. Whitehouse (1913) had no problem with this date, which had already been proposed by J.J. Kneucker in 1879. It seemed an open-and-shut case: 'as *terminus a quo* we naturally have the tragedy of A.D. 70, whose events were still vivid in the memory of the writer. ... Perhaps A.D. 78 might not be an improbable date.' The most likely place, according to Whitehouse and others, was the circle of Jochanan ben Zakkai in Jabneh.[64] The argumentation of the dating is based on various parallels with Josephus' *Jewish War*, in combination with the identification of Nebuchadnezzar and—according to the text, but not historically correct—'his son' Belshazzar with Vespasian and his son Titus. I Baruch 1:11-12:

> Pray for the life of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon and of his son Belshazzar, that their days may endure as the days of heaven above the earth. And pray that the Lord will give us strength and will lighten our eyes, that we shall live under the protection of Nebuchadnezzar king of

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64 O.C. Whitehouse in R.H. Charles (ed.), *The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament in English*, vol. I, Oxford 1913 (repr. 1983), 574-576; cf. E. Schürer, *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, vol. III, 4th ed., Gottingen 1909, 462-463; J.J. Kneucker, *Das Buch Baruch. Geschichte und Kritik, Übersetzung und Erklärung*, 1879.

> Babylon and of his son Belshazzar, *and that we shall serve them many days,* and that we find favor in their sight.[65]

Here the author of I Baruch comes very close indeed to Josephus, not only as regards the date but also as regards his political outlook.

The voice against the bridegroom and bridge is heard in the second chapter, in the context of a confession of guilt, I Baruch 2:20-24:

> You sent your wrath and anger upon us, as you spoke through your servants the prophets, saying: 'Thus says the Lord: Bow your shoulders and serve the king of Babylon and you will dwell in the land which I gave to your forefathers. But if you will not obey the Lord by refusing to serve the king of Babylon, I will banish from the cities of Judah and from the streets of Jerusalem the sounds of joy and gladness, the voice of bridegroom and bride, and the whole land shall be desolate without inhabitants'.
>
> But we did not obey your command to serve the king of Babylon and therefore you carried out the threat which you spoke through your servants the prophets.

There is no need to discuss here the entire history of the scholarly debate over I Baruch. Evidence of cutting and pasting in the text was found, new and more subtle distinctions were made, pros and cons were carefully weighed, and this had consequences for the dating. H. Schmid summarized the results in his article 'Baruch' (1974), written for the *Reallexicon für Antike und Christentum*,[66] in which he called I Baruch a patchwork in which five components can be distinguished, of which he dated four between 150 and 50 BCE. Only one component (1:3-14) might possibly date back to 66 CE, but he preferred a date in the time of Pompey, or even better, Julius Caesar.

Shortly afterwards Emanuel Tov took the discussion an important step further with his doctoral thesis of 1973 (Hebrew University, Jerusalem), published in an extended form in 1975-1976.[67] Tov returned to an argument that Thackeray and Nestle

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[65] Translation: *The Book of Baruch also called I Baruch (Greek and Hebrew)*, edited, reconstructed and translated by Emanuel Tov, Missoula, Montana, 1975, 14; supplemented by me with a few words (in italics) deriving from Whitehouse's translation, 584.

[66] Published in *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 17 (1974) 177-185.

[67] See note 65; E. Tov, *The Septuagint Translation of Jeremiah and Baruch. A*

had already brought forward against the date of Schürer, Whitehouse and others. This was the argument of the close linguistic relationship between the Greek text of I Baruch 1:1-3:8 and the Greek text of the book of Jeremiah in the Septuagint. The similarity was so striking that both texts *seemed* to be the work of the same translator.[68] In his thesis Tov demonstrated convincingly that the similarities were so precise and so regular that the translator *had* to be the same, and at the same time he offered a reconstruction of this part of I Baruch.

Since it had long been known that the Greek text of Jeremiah already existed in 116 BCE,[69] I Baruch 1:1-3:8 also had to be dated to earlier than 116 BCE. The identification of Nebuchadnezzar and 'his son' (who historically was not his son) with Vespasian and his son Titus was therefore untenable. In 1984 Nickelsburg used Tov's conclusion as a basis for the hypothesis that Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar are pseudonyms for the Seleucid kings Antiochus IV Epiphanes (175-164 BCE) and his son Antiochus V Eupator (164-162 BCE). Moreover, Nickelsburg believes that I Baruch as a composition should be ascribed *in its entirety* to the author of the passage 1:1-3:8.[70]

The editors of volume III of the revised English edition of Emil Schürer's *Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes* do not wholly agree with the latter hypothesis. They point out that the *second* half of I Baruch, in particular the passage 4:10-16, may well have been written against the background of the events in 70 CE and they suggest that the compilation of this part and what precedes it into the present whole only took place after that date. 'In that case, the compiler will have been led to put the two halves of the book together by the striking relevance of the already extant first section to conditions after A.D. 70. ... The unhistorical juxtaposition of Nebuchadnezzar and Belshazzar will have seemed reminiscent of

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*Discussion of an Early Version of the LXX of Jeremiah 29-52 and Baruch 1:1-3:8*, Missoula, Montana, 1976, esp. ch.6, 111-133.

68 H.St.J. Thackeray, The Greek Translators of Jeremiah, *Journal of Theological Studies* 4 (1902-1903), 245-266; E. Nestle, *Septuaginta Studien* 4, Stuttgart 1903, 15-16.

69 Tov, *Septuagint Translation*, 165 and 176 notes 48-51.

70 Nickelsburg, in Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writing*, 145; cf. Goldstein, mentioned in Schürer, vol. III (English edition), 737 n. 359.

the relation between Vespasian and Titus.' But they admit that there are no *compelling* arguments for such a late date.[71]

But even if it were unequivocally established (*quod non*) that I Baruch goes back to the second century BCE, as Nickelsburg believes, there is still enough reason to discuss the book here in the context of Jerusalem and the Jews after 70 CE. This reason is the topicality of I Baruch in connection with the presumable annual commemoration of the dramatic destruction of the city and the Temple.

In the Jewish tradition it was and is customary to put important historical events on the calendar of commemorable days. Once incorporated, they keep their place, sometimes even to this very day. A good example is the Chanukah feast. In 164 BCE Judas Maccabeus captured Jerusalem, which the Jews had had to relinquish three years earlier to the troops of Antiochus IV Epiphanes. He immediately had the Temple cleansed of pagan corruption and reopened. This was celebrated with a great feast that lasted eight days. At the same time Judas Maccabeus decreed that this feast was to be observed every year on 25 Kislev. Our information on this festival, Chanukah, is fairly solid. Josephus also has a note about it in which he says that the feast was celebrated from the moment it was instituted into his own time.[72]

The destruction of the second Temple must have been commemorated as a day of national mourning from the outset as well. There was also such a commemoration after the destruction of the first Temple by Nebuchadnezzar. The appropriate Jewish way of commemorating a disaster is to appoint one or more days of fasting in the calendar. Zechariah 8:19 mentions annual fasting in the fourth, fifth, and seventh and tenth month. According to a reliable Jewish tradition, all four fasts commemorated decisive moments during the siege of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, the nadir being the destruction of the Temple on the Ninth of Av in

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71 *Ibidem*, 733-743, esp. 737.

72 Cf. I Macc. 4:36-39; II Macc. 1:8 and 10:1-8; *JA* xii 324-325; John 10:22; several places in the rabbinical literature, cf. H.L. Strack & P. Billerbeck, *Das Evangelium nach Markus, Lukas und Johannes und die Apostelgeschichte erläutert am Talmud und Midrasch*, Munich 1924, 539-541; Schürer, vol. I (English edition), 163; W.R. Farmer, *Maccabees, Zealots, and Josephus. An Inquiry into Jewish Nationalism in the Greco-Roman Period*, New York 1956, 132-145.

the year 586 BCE. Zechariah 7:3-5 implies that this destruction was in fact commemorated for seventy years with official annual fasting. Somebody asks the prophet there (in the fourth year of King Darius):

> Am I to lament and fast in the fifth month as I have done these many years?

The Lord, speaking through Zechariah, answers:

> Say to all the people of the land and to the priests: When you fasted and lamented in the fifth and seventh months these past seventy years, was it indeed with me in mind that you fasted? And when you ate and drank, was it not to please yourselves?

The continuation shows that it is more important for the prophet that people treat each other decently (8:16-19):

> This is what you must do: speak the truth to each other, administer true and sound justice in your courts. Do not plot evil against one another, and do not love perjury, for all these things I hate. This is the word of the Lord.
>
> The word of the Lord of Hosts came to me: These are the words of the Lord of Hosts: The fasts of the fourth month, and of the fifth, seventh and tenth months, are to become festivals of joy and gladness for the house of Judah. So love truth and peace.

Evidently the Jews thought there was no longer any reason for annually commemorating the destruction of 586. They consulted Zechariah, who first scolds them and then tells them on behalf of the Lord that the days of mourning will henceforth be days of joy and gladness.

One of the objects of fasting is to invoke God's mercy through penance: 'fasting is basically an act of penance, a ritual expression of remorse, submission, and supplication.'[73] Fasting goes together with the confession of guilt, the utterance of prayers, and the reading of an appropriate text. The book of I Baruch is eminently suitable as a text to be read and thought about on such an occasion, and indeed it is quite conceivable that the book—either in the time of the Maccabees, though of course only before their resistance met with success, or in or directly after 70 CE—was compiled

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[73] *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, *s.v.* Fasting and Fast days, vol. 6, Jerusalem 1971, 1189-1196, esp. 1190; *ibidem*, *s.v.* Av, the Ninth of, vol. 3, 936-940.

precisely with a view to the institution of a day of national mourning.

It is hardly imaginable that the book was compiled for purely academic reasons or for amusement. The discussion about the various positions on the date of I Baruch can be taken a step further by asking more specifically what the aim of the compiler or author was and what function his work had. Here we need to bear in mind that in the Jewish society of antiquity a text that was primarily written for a religious purpose inevitably had a social and politico-ideological function as well. Religion and politics were closely interrelated, as we know well enough. These considerations lead to the following reconstruction.

I Baruch was written in an initial version in the time of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, *immediately* after the desecration of the Temple in 167 BCE, the event described in the book of Daniel as 'the abominable thing that causes desolation' (Dan. 11:31 and 12:11). The aim of the author and of those who commissioned the work was that the text would be read on a day of national mourning instituted after the desecration. This probably happened once or twice, in 166 and 165. But when the Temple was restored to all its splendour and reopened in 164, and the Chanukah feast was instituted to commemorate this joyful event, the day of national mourning had become superfluous, just as it had become superfluous in the time of the prophet Zechariah. As a result, I Baruch, in the form in which the work then existed, had also become redundant and could be put aside.

One may note that the close parallels between the prayer in I Baruch 1:15-2:19 and the prayer in Daniel 9:4-19 observed by many scholars are easier to explain in the reconstruction which I am proposing. In the past these parallels have often been used to date I Baruch: it was said that Daniel 9 had to be *terminus post quem* with regard to I Baruch, and since the book of Daniel was written between 167 and 165 at the latest, in view of the fact that the author talks about the Temple's state of desecration, I Baruch had to be dated to after 165 BCE. In my opinion, the first version of I Baruch and the Hebrew chapters of Daniel (8-12) were written almost simultaneously. One cannot help thinking that they may have been written by the same author. I do not have the necessary

linguistic and philological competence to offer further arguments to support or refute this conjecture. Nor can I calculate the consequences this might have for the relation between the LXX Jeremiah and the LXX Daniel.

We are explicitly told by the author that the first version of I Baruch was in fact meant to be read aloud during a public gathering: 'Read this book which we are sending you and make confession in the house of the Lord *on the day of the feast and during the days of the solemn assembly*' (1:14, in Emanuel Tov's translation). The words in italics in this passage are a translation of *en hèmerai heortès kai en hèmerais kairou.* It is no problem that the author prescribes that the reading should take place in the Temple, although the Temple had just been desecrated in 167, i.e. had become a place of worship of a Greek god (the Olympian Zeus according to II Maccabees). The author of I Baruch is keeping up the fiction that he is Baruch the secretary of Jeremiah, and that he wrote his book in Babylon and then sent it to Jerusalem, where it was to be read by the Jews 'in the house of the Lord'. This is no problem, for Jerusalem had in fact been destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, as the text also observes, and so the Temple was probably in a bad way, but the Temple had not become a pagan place of worship.

It is not clear to me why Emanuel Tov has translated the last three words of 1:14 (*en hèmerais kairou*) 'during the days of the solemn assembly'. The Revised English Bible translates: 'throughout the festal season'. Tov's translation agrees with that of Whitehouse. Literally the text says: 'during the days of *kairos*'. As is well-known, *kairos*, 'the right time', often has a special connotation in Jewish (and Christian) texts: 'the decisive moment', sometimes in an eschatological sense.

The destruction of the Temple by Titus *was* a 'decisive moment'. If ever there was a *kairos*, it was in 70 CE. The shock had to be absorbed somehow, a day of national mourning was needed, and this required the institution of a mourning rite. Somebody—perhaps Jochanan ben Zakkai or one of his sympathizers—conceived the idea of reworking the early first version of I Baruch from 166/165 BCE. He *supplemented* this version with a second half, and possibly *revised* it in the light of

the recent events. For instance, the passage 2:2-3 ('It has never happened under heaven as it happened in Jerusalem, in conformity with what is written in the Law of Moses, that we should eat the flesh of our sons and daughters') may well refer to the gruesome incident, told in more detail by Josephus in *The Jewish War* vi 201-213, of Maria the daughter of Eleazar, who, driven mad by hunger, ate her own child. This second version was then used as a text to be read at the annual commemoration of the destruction of the Temple on the Ninth of Av. The synchrony with the destruction of 586 BCE is also easily explained in connection with the institution of this new day of national mourning.

This reconstruction is further supported by the report in the *Apostolic Constitutions* (v 20, 3) that Jews assembled annually on the day of the destruction of Jerusalem and read the Lamentations of Jeremiah and the book of Baruch.[74] This report only goes back to the end of the fourth century, so it does not answer the question of when the Jews started this custom. A passage in the Syriac translation of the *Didascalia Apostolorum*, recognized by Schürer as a source of the *Apostolic Constitutions*, also mentions the custom, and that brings us to the third century. A complication arising here is that the *Didascalia* mentions only Lamentations and not the book of Baruch.[75]

This complication is less serious than it would seem. There are various ways of solving it. First, Baruch does get mentioned in a passage in a probably sixth-century text which is (wrongly) attributed to Ephraem Syrus, in which I Baruch 4:9 is cited.[76] In other words: the ritual on the day of national mourning need not have been the same in all Jewish communities throughout the world. In later periods of history, too, the Ninth of Av was not commemorated by all Jews in the same way and with the same texts: the Sephardic rite was different from that of the Ashkenazim, and the Italian and Yemenite rites were different yet again.

Second, we know that various manuscripts of the Greek text of

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74 Schürer, vol. III (English edition), 739; cf. also Schmid, Baruch, 179-184.

75 *Die syrische Didaskalia*, übersetzt und erklärt von Achelis und Flemming, 1904, 113, or R.H. Connolly, *Didascalia Apostolorum*, 1929, 191-192.

76 Schürer, vol. III (English edition), 739-740 and the literature mentioned there; cf. Schmid, Baruch, for another testimony.

the Hebrew Bible place the book of Baruch between Jeremiah and Lamentations, and that various Church Fathers ascribe the book of Baruch to Jeremiah, just as Lamentations was attributed to Jeremiah. This suggests that they regarded Jeremiah, Baruch, and Lamentations as a single whole, just as Josephus, for that matter, regarded Jeremiah and Lamentations—perhaps even including what is now called I Baruch—as a single whole.[77] Nickelsburg has rightly remarked that I Baruch 1:1-3:8 must, at least once, have been included in one scroll together with Jeremiah. Once, but when? There are only two possible moments: either shortly after 167 BCE in connection with the institution and organization of the annual day of national mourning to commemorate the desecration of the Temple by Antiochus IV, or shortly after 70 CE in connection with the commemoration of the destruction of the Temple by Titus.

There is a third point which should lessen our concern about the fact that the Syriac *Didascalia*, unlike the *Apostolic Constitutions*, mentions only Lamentations. How should we *concretely* visualize the proceedings of the memorial ceremony on this day of national mourning? Certainly it will have been very different from a West European Remembrance Day in the year 1992. We are, after all, in the Middle East! I imagine that, after a reading of I Baruch by one or two readers and after a joint prayer, the mass of people would sing songs of lamentation for hours on end, or that the readings were regularly interrupted by song. In any case it is natural to assume that singing was more important than the sermon. This might explain why only Lamentations is mentioned in the Syriac *Didascalia*. The rabbinical literature offers extensive information on the mourning rites to be observed on the Ninth of Av. They lasted fully twenty-four hours, from sunset to sunset.[78]

The rabbinical literature also shows quite plainly that later in Jewish history the reading of the book of Baruch was replaced by the reading of various other texts, instructively specified in the

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77 Tov, *Septuagint Translation*, 169; Nickelsburg, in Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writing*, 146; Josephus, *Contra Apionem* i 38-40 with Thackeray's note in the Loeb edition *ad locum*.

78 For a summary and for further information, see *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, vol. 3, Jerusalem 1971, *s.v.* Av, the Ninth of, 936-940.

*Midrash Echa Rabbati.* But Lamentations has remained a standard element to this very day. That the book of Baruch had to yield its place is only natural if one looks at the *political* message which it contains. This message is clearly aligned to the political creed of the *Realpolitiker* (among whom Josephus): it is quite something to ask a people in mourning to pray for the well-being of its persecutors, of 'Nebuchadnezzar and his son Belshazzar'. After 70 these *could* only be identified with Vespasian and Titus (who still knew who Antiochus IV Epiphanes and Antiochus V Eupator were?), just as the word Babylon was immediately associated with Rome.

'Pray that we shall find favor in their sight!' (1:12). Josephus could pray this, and indeed his prayer was answered, and so, too, Jochanan ben Zakkai, whom, if pressed for a name, I would mention as the most likely 'director' of the mourning ceremony introduced after 70 CE. But it is hard to imagine that the average Jewish peasant was prepared to act so submissively and to turn his left cheek to a Roman *Ortskommandant* after receiving a blow from a rifle-butt on his right cheek. More probably, like every normal human being under such circumstances, the Jewish peasant would have quickly backed off and kept his head down, nursing his hatred behind a mask of apparent impassiveness. For him the feelings of pain and grief at the annually recurring Ninth of Av were more important than praying for the *Ortskommandant* or his supreme leader. The political creed of I Baruch was too much the creed of figures like Josephus, a traitor and a collaborator in the eyes of the ordinary Jewish peasant and the ordinary Jewish rabbi.

There is some risk in regarding texts from the rabbinical literature as altogether historically reliable, but I venture to claim that the outlook of the Jews at the end of the first and the start of the second century CE was more like the attitude which emerges from a story of rabbi Simeon ben Jochai passed down in the *Midrash Rabbah*:[79]

> In the days of Trajan—may his bones be crushed!—his wife gave birth on the night of the ninth of Ab, when all Israel were mourning. The child died on Chanukah. Said the Jews to themselves: 'Shall we light the

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79 *Midrash Rabbah, Esther*, translated by Maurice Simon, London 1951, 3.

> Chanukah lights or not?' In the end they said: 'Let us light them, come what may.' So they lit up. People thereupon went and maligned them to Trajan's wife saying: 'These Jews, when you gave birth, were in mourning, and now, when the child dies, they kindle lights.' She sent a letter to her husband saying: While you are subduing the Barbarians, go and subdue these Jews who have rebelled against you.

Trajan—'may his bones be crushed!'—set off. He found the Jews, 'then surrounded them with his legions and slew them.'

## V

Hearing I Baruch 2:23 on the Ninth of Av, perhaps Flavius Josephus cast his mind back momentarily to Jesus the son of Ananias, Joshua ben Chanania. And as for Jeremiah: in the *Antiquities* Josephus came to the conclusion that Jeremiah had already predicted that Jerusalem would be destroyed in 70 CE: 'He left behind writings concerning the recent capture of our city.'[80] Like himself, Flavius Josephus, alias Joseph ben Matthias. And, like Jeremiah, Joseph ben Matthias was deeply convinced that one day 'a voice against the bridegroom and bride, a voice against all the people' would be heard *in Rome*. That has not happened so far.

The procurator Lucceius Albinus let Jesus the son of Ananias go. Two years later he was transferred to Mauretania Caesariensis, Morocco. In the Year of the Four Emperors he sided with one of the losers, the ephemeron Otho. He was subdued by the legate Cluvius Rufus, who had backed another loser, the ephemeron Vitellius. Fleeing from Gibraltar to Tangier, Albinus and his wife were stabbed to death on the beach of Morocco.[81]

The procurator Pontius Pilate did not let Jesus the son of Joseph go. Christians, not Flavius Josephus, have washed off the blood sticking to his hands. Indeed, there were Christians who canonized him, together with his wife.

God help them.

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80 *JA* x 79.

81 Tacitus, *Histories* ii 58-59.

# Pluriformity and Uniformity

## Reflections on the Transmission of the Text of the Old Testament[1]

ADAM S. VAN DER WOUDE

Our modern translations of the Old Testament are based on the text of a manuscript of the Hebrew Bible that is preserved in the Public Library of St Petersburg in Russia. It is known as the Codex Leningradensis and dates from the year 1008 AD. Although we have a number of other medieval Bible codices which are about a century older, these offer only part of the text of the Old Testament.[2] Obviously this also applies to the fragments of Hebrew Bible books which were found in the lumber room of the Ezra Synagogue of Old Cairo at the end of the last century. They derive from 600-900 AD.[3] These codices and fragments belong to what is usually called the Masoretic textual tradition of the Hebrew Bible. The Masoretes faithfully passed down the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible in the Middle Ages, but also punctuated or vocalized it and added accents and comments.[4]

The relatively recent date of the above manuscripts meant that

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[1] English translation of the farewell lecture held by the author in the auditorium of the Academiegebouw of the University of Groningen on 3 November 1992.

[2] For a brief description of the manuscripts, see E. Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments*, Stuttgart 1973[4], 38 ff.

[3] For the discoveries in the Cairo geniza, see P. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza*, Oxford 1959[2], and for a survey of the biblical fragments preserved in Cambridge University Library, see M.C. Davis, *Hebrew Bible Manuscripts in the Cambridge Geniza Collections*, Vol. 1: Taylor-Schechter Old Series and other Genizah Collections in Cambridge University Library, Cambridge 1976; Vol. 2: Taylor-Schechter New Series and Westminster College Cambridge Collection, Cambridge 1980.

[4] Cf. E. Würthwein, *o. c.*, 12 ff.

up till less than half a century ago we knew almost nothing about the history of the text of the Hebrew Bible books from the time of their origin. True enough, one could try to discover at least part of the history of this tradition via early translations of the Old Testament. In particular there was the Septuagint, the early Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible which was produced in stages largely in the last centuries before the beginning of the Christian era.[5] In some places the text of the Septuagint differs considerably from that of the Hebrew Bible, for instance in the books of Samuel, Jeremiah, and Job. But there was controversy about the character and consequently the text-historical and text-critical value of this Greek translation, which is not homogeneous, not by one hand, and not from the same time. The assessment of the variants in the Septuagint compared with the Masoretic text swung to and fro: sometimes the differences between the textual witnesses were attributed to the license of the translators, other times it was ascribed to the Hebrew *Vorlagen* which formed the basis of the translation. Likewise the Hebrew-Samaritan Pentateuch,[6] the Holy Book of the Samaritans which contains only the books of Genesis to Deuteronomy, could be merely of limited help in the inquiry into the vicissitudes of the Old Testament text. The manuscripts of this tradition not only contain just a part of the Bible, they also derive from the late Middle Ages.

Thus before 1947, the year in which the Dead Sea scrolls were discovered, we could console ourselves with the thought that the original text of the Old Testament had come down virtually un-

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[5] There are a number of excellent introductions to the Septuagint, including the following recent works: N. Fernández Marcos, *Introducción a las versiones griegas de la Biblia*, Madrid 1979; M. Harl-G. Dorival-O. Munnich, *La bible grecque des Septante. Du judaïsme hellénistique au christianisme ancien*, Paris 1988 (with extensive bibliographies).

[6] A satisfactory critical edition of the text of the Samaritan Pentateuch is still lacking, but see A. von Gall, *Der hebräische Pentateuch der Samaritaner*, Giessen 1914-1918, reprinted Berlin 1966; A. and R. Sadaqa, *Jewish and Samaritan Version of the Pentateuch*, Jerusalem 1965; L.F. Girón Blanc, *Pentateuco hebreo-samaritano, Génesis*, Madrid 1976. For the nature of the Samaritan Pentateuch, see E. Würthwein, *o. c.*, 47-49 and E. Tov, The Text of the Old Testament, in: A. S. van der Woude (ed.), *The World of the Bible* (Bible Handbook I), Grand Rapids, Mich. 1986, 168–172 and the literature mentioned there.

changed through the centuries. We could dismiss the Septuagint as a free translation of the Hebrew Bible and the Samaritan Pentateuch as a sectarian rendition of the so-called five books of Moses. The Hebrew Bible, it was recognized, is not without errors (transcribers will make mistakes), and the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch may sometimes have preserved textual variants which were evidently to be preferred, but these versions did not pose an essential problem to those who believed that the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible had been passed down through the centuries with exemplary faithfulness.[7]

The Dead Sea scrolls discovered near Qumran from 1947 onwards have thrown an entirely new light on the textual history of the Hebrew Bible, but have also raised many questions which are difficult to answer.[8] The some 800 scrolls found there, usually preserved in a fragmentary to very fragmentary state, include about 200 manuscripts of Old Testament books.[9] They lead us back to the text of the Old Testament as it circulated in Palestine before the beginning of the Christian era and half a century afterwards, in a few cases even going back as far as the third century BC. This means that we have reached a stage of textual transmission

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[7] Thus as late as 1952 an introduction to the Old Testament could be written in which the textual history of the Hebrew Bible was completely ignored; cf. G.Ch. Aalders, *Oud-testamentische Kanoniek*, Kampen 1952.

[8] So far the best introduction to the discoveries is M. Delcor-F. García Martínez, *Introducción a la literatura esenia de Qumrán*, Madrid 1982, but a more accessible work is G. Vermes, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Qumran in Perspective*, London 1982$^2$. For a brief orientation on the discovered writings, see D. Dimant, Qumran Sectarian Literature, in: M. Stone (ed.), *Jewish Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Compendia Rerum Iudaicarum ad Novum Testamentum II/1), Assen-Philadelphia 1984, 483-550. For a list of the manuscripts published, cf. J.A. Fitzmyer, *The Dead Sea Scrolls. Major Publications and Tools for Study* (SBL Resources for Biblical Study 20), Atlanta GA 1990$^3$, 11-93, and for a complete list of the manuscripts found, see F. García Martínez, 'Lista de mss procedentes de Qumrán', *Henoch* 11 (1989), 149-232. A list of unpublished writings from caves 4 and 11 is given by E. Tov, The Unpublished Qumran Texts from Caves 4 and 11, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 43 (1992), 101-136.

[9] For a survey of the biblical scrolls discovered near Qumran, cf. F. García Martínez, 'Estudios qumránicos 1975-1985. Panorama crítico (VI)', *Estudios Bíblicos* 47 (1989), 225-267 and A.S. van der Woude, 'Fünfzehn Jahre Qumranforschung (1974-1988) [II]', *Theologische Rundschau* 55 (1990), 274-307; see also E. Ulrich, The Biblical Scrolls from Qumran Cave 4: A Progress Report of their Publication, *Revue de Qumrân* 14/54 (1989), 207-228.

which is about 1000 years earlier than that of the medieval manuscripts mentioned earlier. If one takes the book of the twelve Minor Prophets as a whole, all the writings included in the Hebrew Bible, with the exception of Nehemiah and Esther, are represented among the Dead Sea scrolls. The absence of the book of Nehemiah must be a coincidence.[10] Esther, however, did not belong to the holy writings of the Qumran community,[11] in contrast to other writings found there, such as Ecclesiasticus, Tobit, and the Epistle of Jeremiah, which we call apocrypha, and the writings I Enoch, Book of Jubilees, and the Testament of Levi, which we call pseudepigrapha. The members of the Qumran community had no notion of a canon of the Old Testament in the sense of a well-defined number of holy writings as Rabbinic Judaism later recognized it and as we know it.[12]

More surprising than this, however, is that we find a diversity of textual traditions of the Hebrew Bible in Qumran. Although the

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10 Because an Ezra fragment was discovered in cave 4 of Qumran and Ezra manuscripts will also have contained the text of Nehemiah, it seems natural to assume that the absence of a Nehemiah fragment is accidental. Indeed, we can be sure that the Qumran community regarded Nehemiah as one of its holy books in view of the fact that it was familiar with the wood offering in the Temple (cf. Temple Scroll XXIII-XXV), which in the Old Testament is mentioned only in Nehemiah (10:34; cf. 13:31).

11 The view of E. Tov, Hebrew Biblical Manuscripts from the Judaean Desert. Their Contribution to Textual Criticism, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 39 (1988), 5-37, esp. 17, that the absence of an Esther fragment is a coincidence is disproved by the fact that the Purim Feast prescribed in Esther is mentioned nowhere in the known writings of the Qumran community.

12 The history of the canonization of the Old Testament will not be discussed here because it does not necessarily coincide with the standardization of the biblical text. The literature on the subject is endless. I mention only A.C. Sundberg, *The Old Testament of the Early Church*, Cambridge, Mass. 1964; J.A. Sanders, *Torah and Canon*, Philadelphia 1972; S.Z. Leiman, *The Canonization of the Hebrew Scripture. The Talmudic and Midrashic Evidence*, Hamden Ct. 1976; J.A. Sanders, Text and Canon. Concepts and Method, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1979), 5-29; *idem*, *Canon and Community. A Guide to Canonical Criticism*, Philadelphia 1984; J.D. Kaestli-O. Wermelinger (eds.), *Le canon de l'Ancien Testament. Sa formation et son histoire*, Geneva 1984; L. Beckwith, *The Old Testament Canon of the New Testament Church and its Background in Early Judaism*, London 1985; F. Crüsemann, Das "portative Vaterland". Struktur und Genese des alttestamentlichen Kanons, in: Aleida und Jan Assmann (eds.), *Kanon und Zensur*, Munich 1987, 63-79.

biblical writings found there mainly consist of manuscripts which virtually contain the consonantal text of the medieval codices,[13] there are also remnants of scrolls which are very similar to the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch. Indeed, these three traditional categories do not seem to do justice to the totality of biblical writings found in Qumran, which include manuscripts that cannot be properly classified under these three headings.[14] I mention a few examples. Besides fragments with the textual tradition of Jeremiah as we know it from the medieval manuscripts, the Dead Sea scrolls have also yielded a piece of the same book that contains the Hebrew *Vorlage* of the Septuagint version of Jeremiah, which is about a seventh shorter.[15] So in the case of Jeremiah this early Greek translation is not a free rendition but a faithful translation of a Hebrew text. Curiously enough, these two divergent versions of Jeremiah could exist side by side within the Qumran community. The discovery of an

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[13] Approximately 60 % according to the calculation of E. Tov.

[14] This fact has led E. Tov to abandon the traditional classification of the biblical manuscripts into textual types, textual recensions, etc., and to speak simply of texts; cf. A Modern Outlook Based on the Qumran Scrolls, *Hebrew Union College Annual* 53 (1982), 11-27; Hebrew Biblical Manuscripts from the Judaean Desert. Their Contribution to Textual Criticism, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 39 (1988), 5-37. For a criticism of this view, cf. B. Chiesa, Textual History and Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Old Testament, to be published in the Proceedings of the Qumran Congress of Madrid (El Escorial) 1991 in the series Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah, Brill, Leiden.

[15] This manuscript is referred to as 4QJer$^{b}$. For the text, cf. J.G. Janzen, *Studies in the Text of Jeremiah*, Cambridge, Mass. 1973, 181-189 and now in particular E. Tov, The Jeremiah Scrolls from Cave 4, *Revue de Qumrân* 14/54 (1989), 189-206, who believes that 4QJer$^{b}$ comprises the remnants of three different scrolls. 4QJer$^{b}$ does not contain a *recension* of the proto-Masoretic text but an earlier version of the Book of Jeremiah which was supplemented and updated in the Masoretic form; cf. P.M. Bogaert, De Baruch à Jérémie. Les deux rédactions conservées du livre de Jérémie, in: *idem* (ed.), *Le livre de Jérémie. Le prophète et son milieu. Les oracles et leur transmission* (Bibliotheca Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensum 54), Louvain 1981, 168-173; E. Tov, Some Aspects of the Textual and Literary History of the Book of Jeremiah, *ibid.*, 145-167. For a criticism of the position of these authors, see S. Soderlund, *The Greek Text of Jeremiah. A Revised Hypothesis* (JSOT Suppl. Series 47), Sheffield 1985. No other text found near Qumran is so similar in content to the Septuagint text as 4QJer$^{b}$.

Exodus manuscript from cave 4 of Qumran[16] has shown that the text underlying the Samaritan Pentateuch is not sectarian but basically a harmonization of the Masoretic tradition. A striking example of biblical manuscripts which are independent in relatively many places is a Leviticus scroll from cave 11, which like the Exodus manuscript is written in Paleo-Hebrew characters.[17] The textual variants in these manuscripts are not such that they affect the message of the biblical writings concerned, but they do show very clearly that the transmission of the Old Testament in the last centuries before the beginning of the Christian era, at any rate in some circles of Palestinian Judaism, was a fluctuating one.

One might object that the diversity of the textual witnesses in Qumran says nothing about the textual tradition of the Old Testament outside the confines of the community established there. There is in fact some truth in this (as I shall hope to show). But we must consider that quite a few scrolls among the Dead Sea manuscripts were brought to Qumran from outside; indeed, some go back to the time when the community did not yet exist. These biblical manuscripts evidently reflect a diversity of textual traditions which in the centuries before the beginning of the Christian era prevailed outside Qumran too. Conversely, one could say that the diversity of the biblical manuscripts found in the library of Qumran says nothing about the text which was normative for the

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16 Cf. J.E. Sanderson, *An Exodus Scroll from Qumran. 4QpaleoExod$^m$ and the Samaritan Tradition* (Harvard Semitic Studies 30), Atlanta GA 1986; *idem*, The Contribution of 4QpaleoExod$^m$ to Textual Criticism, in: F. García Martínez and E. Puech (eds.), *Mémorial Jean Carmignac*, Paris 1988, 547-560 (= *Revue de Qumrân* 1349-52).

17 Cf. D.N. Freedman-K.A. Mathews with contributions by R.S. Hanson, *The Paleo-Hebrew Leviticus Scroll (11QpaleoLev)*, Winona Lake, Ind. 1985; K.A. Mathews, The Background of the Paleo-Hebrew Texts and Qumran, in: C.L. Meyers-M. O'Connor (eds.), *The Word of the Lord Shall Go Forth* [Festschrift D.N. Freedman], Philadelphia 1983, 549-568. This text led E. Tov to abandon the traditional classification into textual types (proto-Masoretic, early Greek translation, proto-Samaritan) and to reject F.M. Cross's thesis of *Lokaltexte* (the proto-Masoretic text derives from Babylonia, the Septuagint from Egypt, and the proto-Samaritan from Palestine, cf. F.M. Cross, The History of the Biblical text in the Light of Discoveries in the Judaean Desert, *Harvard Theological Review* 57 (1964), 281-299; *idem*, The Evolution of a Theory of Local Texts, in: F.M. Cross-S. Talmon, *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, Cambridge, Mass.-London 1975, 306-320), cf. note 14.

members of the community established there. Writings which one keeps in one's library need not be representative of one's own views. However, on the basis of criteria such as spelling, the use of paragraph signs, the writing of the divine names in Paleo-Hebrew characters, and other details, Emanuel Tov has separated the biblical scrolls which were copied in Qumran from those which were brought there from elsewhere and has shown that Bible books copied in Qumran also represent more than one textual tradition.[18]

From Qumran I take you to Masada and the wadi Murabba'at. During the first Jewish uprising against the Romans, which started in 66 AD and led to the fall of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Temple four years later, the last Jewish resistance against the occupier was offered up till 73 AD at Masada, the imposing and almost impregnable mountain fortress in the desert of Judah. Excavations there led by Yigael Yadin yielded (besides sections of other writings, including Ecclesiasticus) fragments of Genesis, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, Ezekiel, and the Psalms which all basically contain the consonantal text familiar to us from the Masoretic tradition.[19] At the end of the second Jewish uprising against the Romans, which lasted from 132-135 and was led by Simon bar Kochba, Jewish fighters resisted the hated enemy to the very last in virtually inaccessible parts of the desert of Judah. The biblical manuscripts which they left us in caves in the wadi Murabba'at also have, apart from a few almost negligible details, the consonantal text which we know from the medieval manuscripts.[20]

We find therefore that neither Masada nor the caves of the wadi Murabba'at give evidence of a pluriform textual tradition of the Old Testament as we see it in Qumran. This is remarkable and obviously raises the question: how and why was the uniform

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[18] E. Tov, Hebrew Biblical Manuscripts from the Judaean Desert. Their Contribution to Textual Criticism, *Journal of Jewish Studies* 39 (1988), 5-37.

[19] Cf. Y. Yadin, The Excavation of Masada - 1963/1964. Preliminary Report, *Israel Exploration Journal* 15 (1965), 1-120, esp. 81-82, 103-104; *idem*, *Masada. Herod's Fortress and the Zealots' Last Stand*, London-New York 1966, 179, 187-189.

[20] Cf. P. Benoit, J.T. Milik, and R. de Vaux, *Les grottes de Murabba'at* (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert II), Oxford 1961, 75 ff., 181 ff. The divergent readings are largely orthographical in kind.

textual tradition reached which underlies the medieval manuscripts on which our Bible translations are based, in view of the pluriformity of the textual tradition of the Old Testament in Qumran? This problem has been answered in various ways. It is usually assumed that the standardization of the text took place during the second half of the first century AD in the school of Javne. The Pharisees, who were the only religious party to survive the first uprising against the Romans, supposedly succeeded with the Scribes after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 AD in preserving and strengthening the national unity of the Jews by establishing the canon of Holy Scripture for once and for all and achieving a consolidation of the biblical text. But this theory is not supported by the Rabbinic tradition and is also hard to reconcile with the discoveries at Masada. Moshe Greenberg therefore expressed the view that the standardization of the text took place in a much earlier period and should be attributed to the initiative of Scribes within reach of the Temple in Jerusalem, who made a critical selection among manuscripts and textual variants and in doing so excluded the proto-Samaritan Pentateuch and the Hebrew *Vorlagen* of the Septuagint.[21] Greenberg dates this text-critical work from the middle of the second century BC, after the rededication of the Temple in 164 and the re-establishment of the temple library by Judas Maccabeus (mentioned in II Maccabees). He draws parallels here with the work of the Alexandrian grammarians, who earlier carried out a recension of the writings of Homer and other Greek authors.[22] Not until Rabbinic Judaism, which consolidated itself at the end of the first and the beginning of the second century, could the established standard text be given a permanent monopoly by taking divergent biblical scrolls out of circulation. Albrektson opposed this theory by claiming that the textual tradition current among the Pharisees gained dominance and gradually supplanted other textual witnesses in Rabbinic Judaism.[23] Just

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[21] M. Greenberg, The Stabilization of the Text of the Hebrew Bible Reviewed in the Light of the Biblical Materials from the Judaean Desert, *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 76 (1956), 157-167.

[22] Cf. L.D. Reynolds and N.G. Wilson, *Scribes and Scholars. A Guide to the Transmission of Greek and Latin Literature*, Oxford 1991$^3$, 5 ff.

[23] B. Albrektson, Reflections on the Emergence of a Standard Text of the Hebrew Bible, *Congress Volume Göttingen 1977* (Supplements to Vetus Testa-

as the religious diversity of Judaism made way for unity after 70, so the pluriform textual tradition of the Old Testament was gradually replaced by uniformity. In his view, the standard text was not achieved by deliberate text-critical work.[24]

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mentum 29), Leiden 1978, 49-65.

[24] In the article mentioned in the previous note, Albrektson strongly opposed the view that the transition from a diversity of textual traditions to a standardized text should be attributed to the Scribes. In his opinion, the frequently drawn parallel with the work of the Alexandrian grammarians cannot be demonstrated. He points out that Rabbinic literature contains no proposals for textual corrections or disputes about certain readings in the Hebrew Bible. Nor in his view can the text-critical work supposedly carried out by the Scribes be proved. It needs to be observed here that once the text had been standardized, the rabbis regarded it as literally inspired by God, and so would not want to question it. But this does not prove that the standardization was achieved without text-critical labour.

According to many critics, a standardized text is presupposed by the fact that Rabbi Aqiba argues with minute grammatical and orthographical details in his exegesis of the Scriptures around the beginning of the second century AD. But Albrektson believes that Aqiba's exegetical method does not necessarily mean that every rabbi used the same text: what he needed in his method was *a* text to which he could apply it. Moreover, says Albrektson, certain Rabbinic arguments show that they based themselves on a text which was somewhat different from the medieval texts. This contention is also doubtful. Minor differences existed into the Middle Ages within the proto-Masoretic tradition from after 70 AD. But this does not mean that the standard text as such was not generally accepted. If there were no such text, Rabbi Aqiba could hardly have hoped that his exegetical method would gain currency elsewhere.

A number of passages in Rabbinic literature mention three scrolls which were kept in the temple court in Jerusalem. According to the tradition (which is not always identical), they differed from each other on certain points. The Scribes are said to have adopted the corresponding reading of two manuscripts instead of the variant reading of the third. In the view of many scholars, this, too, shows that the Scribes engaged in text-critical work before 70 AD. Albrektson observes that the tradition of the three scrolls is not identical in the four versions we have of it (cf. S. Talmon, The Three Scrolls of the Law that were Found in the Temple Court, *Textus* 2 (1962), 14-27). Following the suggestion of others, he assumes that the statements about the careful comparison of manuscripts and variant readings are a Rabbinic embellishment. He also notes that it is doubted whether the scrolls were biblical manuscripts. Albrektson's considerations here are not convincing either. The terms applied to the three scrolls almost certainly indicate biblical manuscripts. It is unlikely that the statement about the comparison of manuscripts and their variants is solely to be attributed to later rabbis. If there were no early tradition about the textual comparison, the rabbis, in

In view of the manuscripts found in Masada and the wadi Murabba'at , one can conclude that one particular textual witness, namely the tradition elaborated by the Masoretes in the Middle Ages, became normative in all of Judaism after 70 AD. There are no indications of a pluriform textual tradition in the early Rabbinic period, only of minimal differences, extending into the Middle Ages, within the one proto-Masoretic tradition.[25] Albrektson is right in assuming that the textual tradition of the Hebrew Bible which won the day was used by the Pharisees. But this still leaves at least one question unanswered. If, as he supposes, the textual tradition supported by the Pharisees prevailed after 70 AD,

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view of their standard text which they held to be divinely inspired, would have no reason to start a tradition which ascribed the standardization to a critical process of selection. So the tradition about the scrolls in the temple court rather supports the theory that the consonantal text of the Hebrew Bible as we have it today did not come about without critical work on the text.

According to Albrektson, the text-critical work supposedly carried out by the Scribes cannot explain why the deficiencies of the Hebrew text of the Old Testament were not expurgated. The text of the book of Samuel in its Masoretic form cannot be plausibly represented as the result of a careful comparison of the manuscripts and variants, since it is full of errors and lacunae. And why did the Scribes opt for the Masoretic text of Jeremiah instead of the earlier tradition of the book as we know it from the Septuagint and the second manuscript of Jeremiah from cave 4? These questions are indeed justified on the basis of *our* views on textual criticism. But the problem is that we do not know the criteria for the selection made by the Scribes, quite apart from the question whether they possessed other manuscripts of Samuel and Jeremiah than those which were in the proto-Masoretic tradition in the last centuries before the beginning of the Christian era.

Finally, Albrektson doubts whether absolute uniformity of the textual tradition was the ideal of the early rabbis. He believes that the textual variants which bother us may have been regarded by them as an advantage rather than a disadvantage: in the view of the rabbis, Scripture contained many levels and many meanings, and one did not exclude the other. But a careful distinction needs to be made here. The rabbis and the Scribes which preceded them most certainly attached importance to a uniform textual tradition: pluriformity would have been at odds with the divine authority of Scripture as they saw it. But they did not necessarily find one meaning in the individual details of the one Scripture.

[25] Cf. M. Goshen-Gottstein, Hebrew Biblical Manuscripts: Their History and Place in the HUBP Edition, *Biblica* 48 (1967), 243-290 (= F.M. Cross-S. Talmon (eds.), *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text*, Cambridge, Mass.-London 1975, 42-89).

it must have existed before that. But in view of the pluriformity of the textual traditions of the Old Testament which can still be observed in Qumran, we still have to explain how and why the Pharisees had an essentially uniform textual tradition before the catastrophe of 70 AD.

We can infer that the standardization of the proto-Masoretic text of the Hebrew Bible had basically already taken place in certain Jewish circles before 70 AD not only from the discoveries of biblical writings at Masada, but also from the fact that 'normative' Judaism had rejected the textual tradition of the Septuagint at an early stage. A Greek manuscript of the Minor Prophets found in the desert of Judah and deriving from the latter half of the first century BC has a text which is a revision of the Septuagint tradition on the basis of a Hebrew text which shows marked similarities with the proto-Masoretic tradition which became generally current after 70 AD.[26] There are indications that the process of adapting the early Greek tradition to the proto-Masoretic text already started in the second century BC.[27] The later attempts of Aquila, Theodotion, and Symmachus to offer the Jewish diaspora a Greek translation of the Old Testament which corresponded with the standardized Hebrew text follow on from this pre-Christian revision of the Septuagint and so should not be explained as being aimed against the Christians, who had accepted the Septuagint as their Bible.[28] Rather one sees here the need to provide a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible which corresponded in content with the supported Hebrew textual tradition. These attempts to harmonize the Greek text of the Septuagint with that of the proto-Masoretic tradition not only presuppose a guiding

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26 Cf. D. Barthélemy, *Les devanciers d'Aquila. Première publication intégrale du texte des fragments du Dodécaprophéton* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum 10), Leiden 1963 and now in particular E. Tov with the collaboration of R.A. Kraft and a contribution by P.J. Parsons, *The Greek Minor Prophets Scroll from Naḥal Ḥever (8ḤevXIIgr)* (Discoveries in the Judaean Desert 8), Oxford 1990.

27 Cf. S.P. Brock, The Phenomenon of the Septuagint, *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 17 (1972), 11-36; A. Pietersma, Kyrios or Tetragram: A Renewed Quest for the Original LXX, in: A. Pietersma-C. Cox (eds.), *De Septuaginta. Studies in honour of John William Wevers on his sixty-fifth birthday*, Mississauga, Ont. 1984, 85-101.

28 One still finds this view frequently expressed, cf. e.g. G. Fohrer, *Einleitung in das Alte Testament*, Heidelberg 1979[12], 547.

Hebrew prototype but also great uniformity of the proto-Masoretic tradition. Moreover, the endeavour to create new Greek translations which agreed with the standard Hebrew text most certainly does evidence *text-critical* work. One therefore has reason to assume that the realization of the standardized proto-Masoretic textual tradition did not take place without critical interventions in the text. This is also suggested by the Rabbinic tradition about the three scrolls kept in the temple court in Jerusalem: we are told that in the case of textual variants between these three the reading which two of the three had in common was chosen.[29] The *tiqqune sopherim*, the 'corrections of the Scribes', which seem to go back to the pre-Christian era, also point in the direction of textual criticism, though of a particular kind.[30] At the same time the standardization of the proto-Masoretic tradition should be thought of as a process, in which readings regarded as erroneous were gradually expurgated, sporadic changes were made in the text for theological reasons, and manuscripts which did not meet the requirement of the standardized text were removed in the course of time. We know little about the details of this process, but one does not get the impression that this text-critical work drastically encroached upon the proto-Masoretic tradition. Conversely, it is hard to understand how Josephus, at the end of the first century AD, could state that the traditional writings were passed down by the forefathers with scrupulous precision[31] and that nobody dared to add, omit, or change anything in them.[32] The events of 70 AD at most precipitated the final phase in the proto-Masoretic textual tradition, but did not bring about the process of standardization as such.

I have previously asked the question with which I started the preparation of this farewell lecture: why is it that the pluriformity of the textual tradition of the Old Testament which we still find in Qumran made way for uniformity? I have increasingly come to doubt whether this is the right way of formulating the problem. It

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[29] Cf. S. Talmon, The Three Scrolls of the Law that were Found in the Temple Court, *Textus* 2 (1962), 14-27.

[30] C. McCarthy, *The Tiqqune Sopherim and Other Theological Corrections in the Masoretic Text of the Old Testament* (Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 36), Freiburg/Switzerland-Göttingen 1981.

[31] Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I, 29.

[32] Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I, 42.

tacitly suggests that the uniformity of the textual tradition of the Hebrew Bible was a result of pluriformity, either through deliberate text-critical interventions in the proto-Masoretic tradition in which the *Vorlagen* of the Septuagint and the proto-Samaritan Pentateuch were eliminated (Greenberg), or through an accidental historical development in which the textual tradition used by the Pharisees gradually won the day (Albrektson). Instead of supposing a development from pluriformity to uniformity in the textual tradition of the Old Testament, we should also theoretically consider the possibility that there was always a relative uniformity of textual tradition in the religious circles around the Temple of Jerusalem.[33] This means that there was a basically uniform tradition *besides* a pluriform tradition in Palestine Judaism in the last centuries BC, in the sense that only the proto-Masoretic textual tradition was passed on in Jerusalem, whereas elsewhere also biblical manuscripts circulated which bore close resemblance to the text of the Septuagint or the Samaritan Pentateuch or differed in other respects from the proto-Masoretic tradition. But, of course, a theoretical possibility is not yet a historical fact! It is far from simple to prove the co-existence of a basically uniform and a pluriform textual tradition because we have no direct information about the textual tradition of the Old Testament in Temple circles in the centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. Nevertheless, there seem to me to be a number of indirect indications which strongly suggest that no other textual tradition than the proto-Masoretic was ever supported in the Temple of Jerusalem and among the Scribes, even if this tradition still fluctuated internally.

The scarce Rabbinic information about text-critical work testifies to a process within the framework of the same tradition without influence from other textual witnesses.[34] An interesting report

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[33] E. Tov comes close to this position when he states: 'Although ... textual plurality was characteristic for all of Palestine, it appears that in temple circles there existed a preference for one textual tradition, i.e., the texts of the Masoretic family' (E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Minneapolis-Assen/Maastricht 1992, 191).

[34] Cf. the scrolls mentioned in notes 24 and 29 and the Rabbinic information about correctors (*maggihim*) of biblical manuscripts in the Temple of Jerusalem (see the texts mentioned by J. Levy, *Wörterbuch über die Talmudim*

in this connection is found in the Letter of Aristeas, a work that was probably produced towards the end of the second century BC.[35] It relates that the Egyptian king Ptolemy II Philadelphus, who ruled from 285-247 BC, commissioned a Greek translation of the books Genesis-Deuteronomy at the instigation of his librarian Demetrius of Phalerum. According to Demetrius, the manuscripts of the Hebrew Bible in Egypt were, in the opinion of experts, inaccurate transmissions and contained many mistakes, and so at the request of his librarian the king called in the assistance of the Jewish highpriest Eleazar. He appointed 72 elders, six representatives from each of the twelve tribes of Israel, as translators and gave them a Torah scroll from Jerusalem on their journey to Alexandria, the royal residence. The result of the translation work carried out there was the Septuagint, which did not yet designate the Greek translation of the entire Old Testament including the apocrypha, but only the translation of the so-called five books of Moses. There can be no doubt that the story in the Letter of Aristeas about the origin of the Septuagint contains many legendary features. One can also disagree about the immediate cause and the goal of the translation,[36] but in all reason it cannot be doubted that it was produced in the course of the third century

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*und Midraschim* III, Berlin and Vienna 1924, 334).

35 For the Greek text of the Letter of Aristeas, see A. Pelletier, *Lettre d'Aristée à Philocrate* (Sources Chrétiennes 89), Paris 1962 (with introduction, French translation, and notes).

36 According to N. Meisner, *Aristeasbrief* (Jüdische Schriften aus hellenistischer-römischer Zeit II, 1), Gütersloh 1973, 35-87, the work was a propaganda pamphlet written for the Greeks to demonstrate the excellence of the Jewish religion and the Jewish Law. But most scholars believe that the letter was written for Jews and aims at defending the literary productions of Alexandrian Judaism from attacks by Palestine Judaism. Of these scholars G. Howard (The Letter of Aristeas: a Re-Evaluation, *Journal of Theological Studies* 22 (1971), 337-348) believes that the letter's purpose is to affirm the value of the Septuagint, S.P. Brock (The Phenomenon of the Septuagint, *Oudtestamentische Studiën* 17 (1972), 11-36) holds that the work is aimed against the attempts of Palestine Jews to revise the Septuagint, and A.F.J. Klijn (The Letter of Aristeas and the Greek Translation of the Pentateuch in Egypt, *New Testament Studies* 11 (1964-1965), 154-158; see also *idem*, A Library of Scriptures in Jerusalem?, *Studia Codicologica* (Texte und Untersuchungen 124), Berlin 1977, 265-272, esp. 265-267) thinks that the book was meant to defend the Septuagint against the Jewish priests of Leontopolis.

in Egypt. More important, however, is the letter's defence of the Septuagint translation. Apparently Jewish immigrants, who had sought refuge in Egypt on account of the troubles in Judah in the years before and after the Maccabean revolt in 167 BC, had claimed that the translation of the Septuagint was inadequate. The author defends his view that it does not require revision[37] by pointing out that the translation had the approval of the highpriest and was carried out by Palestinian Jews, that it was executed with great care, and that it was based on a text from Jerusalem. It is hard to verify the historical reliability of this information. But in any case it presupposes a discrepancy between the Septuagint translation current in Egypt and the textual tradition in Jerusalem. The latter is almost certainly the proto-Masoretic tradition and therefore must already have been relatively uniform.[38]

Another indirect way of finding out which textual tradition was current in religious circles around the Temple in the centuries before the beginning of the Christian era is to study the text of Chronicles. In the fourth century BC the author of this book quotes extensively from Samuel and Kings, often literally, although he also gives summaries of his sources which are

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[37] Cf. S.P. Brock, *o. c.* (note 35).

[38] I refrain from considering here the question of the nature of the Hebrew text which underlies the Septuagint translation of the Pentateuch. R. Hanhart, Zum gegenwärtigen Stand der Septuagintforschung, in: A. Pietersma-C. Cox, *De Septuaginta. Studies in honour of John William Wevers on his sixty-fifth birthday*, Mississauga, Ont. 1984, 3-18, urges a proto-Masoretic *Vorlage*, whereas F.M. Cross, The Evolution of a Theory of Local texts, in: F.M. Cross-S. Talmon, *Qumran and the History of the Biblical text*, Cambridge, Mass.-London 1975, 306-320, opts for an Egyptian local text of the Palestinian textual type, which was related to the proto-Samaritan Pentateuch. Cross's view has been opposed by E. Tov (cf. his *The Text-Critical Use of the Septuagint in Biblical Research* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies 3), Jerusalem 1981, 254-260). Although serious objections can be made to the theory of the *Lokaltexte* argued by Cross, it is not easy to solve the problem of why the Septuagint had to be defended against Jews in the Letter of Aristeas a century after it was written *if in fact it goes back to the proto-Masoretic tradition.* In this way the similarities between the Septuagint and the Samaritan Pentateuch also remain largely unexplained. On the other hand, the oldest Septuagint fragment of Deuteronomy is more similar to the Masoretic text than first was thought, cf. J.W. Wevers, The Attitude of the Greek Translator of Deuteronomy towards his Parent Text, in: H. Donner *et al.* (eds.), *Beiträge zur Alttestamentlichen Theologie* [Festschrift W. Zimmerli], Göttingen 1977, 498-505.

coloured by his own views and for theological reasons often omits certain passages from his *Vorlagen.*[39] One need not doubt that the author of Chronicles, with his interest in the Levites and the cult, was closely connected with the Temple in Jerusalem. The question of what his *Vorlage* of the book of Samuel looked like cannot at present be answered without taking into account the Samuel scrolls from cave 4 of Qumran, in particular the manuscript 4QSam$^a$, which deviates considerably from the Samuel text familiar to us. In their studies on the remnants of the Samuel manuscript Cross[40] and Ulrich[41] have tried to show that the *Vorlage* drawn on by the author of Chronicles was more closely related to 4QSam$^a$ and the markedly similar text of the early Greek translation than to the familiar Masoretic text of Samuel. If this conclusion is right, it would seriously undermine my theory that the Jews in Jerusalem used only the proto-Masoretic tradition, at any rate if 4QSam$^a$ is to be regarded as a distinct textual *tradition.* A final judgement on the text-historical place of 4QSam$^a$ is hard to give as long as the remaining text of this manuscript has not been fully published. But renewed study of the material provided by Ulrich has not been able to convince me of the correctness of his theory that the textual tradition of 4QSam$^a$ derives from a period prior to the composition of the book of Chronicles. It is also possible and indeed likely that the text of Chronicles influenced that of 4QSam$^a$.[42] But in that case the author of Chronicles, for all the

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[39] For the hermeneutical principles which guided the author of Chronicles, see Th. Willi, *Die Chronik als Auslegung* (Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments 106), Göttingen 1972, esp. 66 ff.

[40] F.M. Cross, A New Qumran Biblical Fragment Related to the Original Hebrew Underlying the Septuagint, *Bulletin of the American Schools for Oriental Research* 132 (1953), 15-26; *idem*, The History of the Biblical Text in the Light of the Discoveries in the Judaean Desert, *Harvard Theological Review* 57 (1964), 281-294; *idem*, The Evolution of a Theory of Local Texts, *1972 Proceedings: IOSCS and Pseudepigrapha*, Missoula 1972, 108-126.

[41] E.C. Ulrich, *The Qumran Text of Samuel and Josephus* (Harvard Semitic Monograph 19), Missoula 1978.

[42] Cf. also E. Tov, The Text of the Old Testament, in: A. S. van der Woude (ed.), *The World of the Old Testament* (Bible Handbook I), Grand Rapids, Mich. 1986, 171: 'The Samuel scrolls from cave 4 of Qumran contain many readings which derived from the parallel texts in Chron. See also A. van der Kooij, De tekst van Samuel en het tekstkritisch onderzoek, *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* 36 (1982), 177-204, esp. 202, note 113.

rectifications and alterations of his *Vorlage*, apparently based himself on the proto-Masoretic text of the books of Samuel and Kings.

In my view, these considerations suggest that a conservative textual tradition of the available books of the Old Testament prevailed in Jerusalem during the last centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. Texts related to the Septuagint tradition, such as 4QJer$^{b}$ and 4QSam$^{a}$, and the proto-Samaritan Pentateuch evidently failed to establish themselves in priestly and scribal circles in Jerusalem because they were regarded there as unacceptable deviations from the tradition. In other words, there is every appearance that since a long time one textual tradition held sway in the Temple of Jerusalem, a tradition which was later revised on a limited scale by priests and Scribes and which formed the basis of the text as we have it today. I am not saying that the textual tradition of Jerusalem was completely identical at that time to the consonantal text which was passed on to us by the Masoretes, but I do think we should consider the theory that the standardization of the text of the Hebrew Bible was a process within the framework of that one textual tradition and was not based on a selection from a pluriform tradition as we know it from Qumran.

Pluriformity of scriptural tradition is a normal phenomenon, uniformity is an exception. It has rightly been pointed out that as long as no clear distinction was made between Scripture and commentary on Scripture, both edifying and scholarly commentary was incorporated in the text of Scripture.[43] Sometimes passages from the Old Testament tradition were changed because they were offensive to piety, oriented as it was to the Torah,[44] or objectionable for other reasons. The extent to which this happened, besides other factors such as clerical errors, divergent spelling, harmonizations and simplification of outdated style, led to a palette of traditions of the Old Testament text which differed on points from one another, particularly outside Jerusalem. But a pluriform textual tradition is not a problem for the believer *as long*

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[43] E. Ulrich, Horizons of Old Testament Textual Research at the Thirtieth Anniversary of Qumran Cave 4, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 46 (1984), 613-636, esp. 617.

[44] Cf. A. Rofé, The Nomistic Correction in Biblical Manuscripts and its Occurrence in 4QSam$^{a}$, *Revue de Qumrân* 14/54 (1989), 247-254.

*as there is an authoritative body within his circle which, besides Scripture, decides on doctrine and life and which, appealing to inspiration by the Holy Ghost, feels justified in adapting the tradition to the current situation.* In that case the norm is not only provided by the prophetic inspiration in the past of which Scripture is the result, but also and not in the last place by the claim of those who feel guided in the present by the Spirit of God. That Qumran does not give us any indications of an attempt to replace the pluriformity of the Old Testament textual tradition by uniformity is, in my view, due to the fact that there was a priestly doctrinal authority over and above Scripture which elsewhere in early Judaism had lost a great deal of its influence through the rise of the Pharisees and Scribes. In Qumran it is the priests who offer guidance on the basis of the Torah (Temple Scroll 56:2-11) and there it is the sons of Aaron who 'rule in matters of justice and property'. There, as a kind of second Torah, the Temple Scroll of cave 11 could be written.[45] There it was above all the priest, referred to in the Dead Sea scrolls as the Teacher of Righteousness, who subordinated the doctrine and life of his community to his authority inspired by God's Spirit.[46]

However, a uniform textual tradition becomes necessary when there is no longer an appeal to present-day divine inspiration and people wish to preserve earlier prophetic inspiration in Scripture, in other words, when the authority outside Scripture is shifted to Scripture itself. The priests from Jerusalem and the Scribes before the beginning of the Christian era and after these the early rabbis believed that the Holy Ghost had withdrawn since the days of Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.[47] What they were left with were books, holy writings, which in principle did not admit of edifying or modernizing changes. This gradually led to the canonization of Holy Scripture as God's literally inspired word. In

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[45] Y. Yadin, *The Temple Scroll*, Volumes I-III with Supplement, Jerusalem 1983.

[46] Cf. P. Schulz, *Der Autoritätsanspruch des Lehrers der Gerechtigkeit in Qumran*, Meisenheim am Glan 1974.

[47] Cf. I Maccabees 4:46; 9:27; 14:41; Daniel 3:38 (Greek text) and Josephus, *Contra Apionem* I, 40-41. See also P. Schäfer, *Die Vorstellung vom heiligen Geist in der rabbinischen Literatur* (Studien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 28), Munich 1972.

an interesting essay entitled 'Die Schrift der rabbinischen Schriftausleger' the Jewish scholar Arnold Goldberg has pointed out that the rabbis see Scripture as an exactly determined number of graphic signs, which as an eternally valid revelation of God is contemporaneous with the reader and can therefore be explained ahistorically.[48] Here one finds the final phase of a process that started with a Scripture that referred to the divine revelation in history and ended with a Scripture which is itself literal revelation. By definition this development had to promote the establishment of a standardized text. It is quite possible, moreover, that in priestly and scribal circles in Jerusalem there existed a more conscious, I should almost say more scientific, attitude than elsewhere, quite apart from the question whether the ideas about text-critical work inspired by the Alexandrian grammarians completely passed Jerusalem by.

What I have tried to show is that we should not be tempted to assume without further proof that the pluriformity of the textual tradition of the Old Testament as found in Qumran also existed in priestly circles in Jerusalem and among the Scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees in the centuries before the beginning of the Christian era. In my view, the text of the Old Testament passed down to us is not the product of a drastic recension or of a historical accident. It is a basically faithful representation of the tradition by the spiritual leaders of early Judaism which is grounded on theological considerations and possibly also stimulated by the influence of the Alexandrian grammarians. This is not to say that I recommend a blind faith in the letter of the Masoretic textual tradition, let alone a defence of the literal inspiration of Scripture, but I do suggest that we should have great respect for this tradition, with all the consequences this has for our text-critical work on the Hebrew Bible.[49]

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48 *Frankfurter Judaistische Beiträge* 15 (1987), 1-15.

49 I am greatly indebted to Anthony Runia for translating this lecture.

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